Dudley
CHRONICLE
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SCHOOLS UNITE IN £60m TRUST

Report by Clare Butler

A NEW £60 million multi-academy trust which will support more than 8,500 pupils will be launched across Dudley.

The Dudley Academies Trust will be sponsored by Dudley College and bring together Castle High School, Hillcrest School and Community College, Holly Hall Academy and High Arcal School, so they can to share resources and expertise.

College bosses will also plough half a million pounds into the trust to 'kick start the process'.

Dudley College principal Lowell Williams, hailed the plans as being 'aspirational' for the future 'transformation' of the schools'.

The move has been given the green light by the Schools Commissioner for the West Midlands and the Department for Education and is set to start in September.

Lowell Williams

Mr Williams said: "Bringing together the combined strengths of four secondary schools alongside Dudley College will give us the best chance of providing outstanding technical education to Dudley's young people.

"We know that educational outcomes are not as high as they should be and we will work tirelessly to address this.

"Our plans are aspirational, not only for the development of our teaching and learning strategies and our curriculum, but also for the future transformation of the schools' estates.

Sponsor

"As a sponsor, the college will release up to half a million pounds to the trust to kick start this process.

"We recognise that current Government plans significantly re-shape the role of local authorities in compulsory education. That's why we are delighted that the Schools Commissioner for the West Midlands has put her faith in Dudley College and our local school partners to bring about a transformation of pre-16 education in the borough."

Bosses say that the proposal emerged following a 'lengthy consideration and meticulous planning'.

A trust board chaired by Mr Williams will be established and a chief executive officer will also be recruited.

Schools will retain their own identities, management and leadership.

Once constituted, the Dudley Academies Trust with the college will annually support 8,500 young people aged 11 to 19 with an operating income in excess of £60m.

EMOTIONAL DAY OUT FOR VETERAN VIV AT MUSEUM

James 'Vivian' Wollason celebrates his 100th birthday at Black Country Living Museum with his chauffeur for the day Geoffrey Bramwell

A VETERAN celebrated his 100th birthday in style, with a little help from the Black Country Museum.

James 'Vivian' Rollason, known as Viv to his family, was born right next to the museum in Park Lane, Tipton, on February 5, 1917, but never quite got around to visiting.

So for his birthday, he and eight members of his family had a special day courtesy of the museum and its staff.

Viv, who lives in Coseley, was personally greeted by his own chauffeur, costumed guide Geoffrey Bramwell, who drove him around the museum in a 100-year-old Black Country-made car.

Costumed characters then all gathered to surprise Viv in the Bottle & Glass Inn – the museum's pub – greeting him with a cake, balloons and a hearty chorus of 'Happy Birthday'.

Viv fought in the Second World War in the 79th Armoured Division where he worked as a tank engineer after his call up at the aged of 23. He said: "I born in the First World War, fought in the Second but won't bother with another."

After the war Viv worked in offices in Horsley Bridge and had an assistant typist, Joan, who would later become his wife of 55 years.

Viv said of his special birthday treat: "The day has nearly brought tears to my eyes. It's very kind.

"I still keep active, I live independently and I enjoy cooking and gardening so the truth is I don't feel old at all!"

He was joined by family members including daughter Judy Hughes, 60, and granddaughter Katie Thornton, 25, as well as his late wife's cousins Barbara Frolich and Mary Robinson, both aged 81.

Young Viv in his Army days

DEATH

Murder charge after woman is stabbed

A MURDER investigation has been launched after a woman died after walking into a doctor's surgery with a stab wound.

A man was arrested after the tragedy in Rowley Regis.

Officers were called to Rowley Healthcare on Hawes Lane, at around 3.50pm Monday.

The woman, who was believed to be in her 50s, was treated by medical staff and taken to hospital but died a short time later.

A 54-year-old man was arrested at the surgery on suspicion of murder and is currently helping police with their inquiries.

RETAIL

New Saturday street market set to open

A NEW outdoor market will be held in Stourbridge for the first time on Saturday.

The weekly market on Lower High Street and Coventry Street will be every Saturday, selling food, crafts and other goods.

LSD Promotions initially wanted to hold a market on Thursdays in High Street and Market Street, closing off the roads off to traffic. But it was forced to re-think the proposals following opposition from shop bosses.

COLLISION

Girl 'stable' after crash kills her dog

A SCHOOLGIRL who suffered serious leg injuries in a road accident in which her pet dog died is now in a 'stable' condition in hospital.

The 15-year-old was walking beside Coombs Road in Halesowen when she was hurt as a result of a collision between a silver Volkswagen Bora and a silver Kia Sportage at about 4.30pm on January 27, at the junction with Amber Road.

Both drivers stopped at the scene and are assisting officers with the investigation, but police are appealing for anyone who witnessed the accident to call PC Alex Ingram via 101.

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WIN TICKETS TO WEDDING SHOW

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Sir Lenny has a nose for comedy talent

Lenny Henry hosts club night

DUDLEY-BORN comedian Lenny Henry will host a night of talent and laughter at a Birmingham comedy club next month in aid of Comic Relief Live.

A a series of unique comedy gigs hosted by familiar Comic Relief faces will visit four UK cities for Red Nose Day.

Comic Relief Live in Birmingham will see Lenny Henry host a night of fresh raw talent on February 22 at The Glee Club in the Arcadian Centre, off Hurst Street.

Sir Lenny said: "It will be an honour to host Comic Relief Live in Birmingham, I can't wait to share the stage with the best up and coming comedians on the circuit. Being able to profile the future stars of the comedy world will be a real thrill and I'm excited to see what the night will bring."

Nine new noses will be released as part of the fundraising for the Red Nose Day, set to take place this March.

Singer and songwriter Ed Sheeran, whose recently announced concerts at Birmingham's Barclaycard Arena were instant sell-outs, will be among a host of comedians and celebrities supporting this year's Red Nose Day, on March 24. These also include Stephen Hawking, Warwick Davies, Hugh Dennis, Russell Kane, Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders,.

For the first time ever, nine different nose characters will be coming to life in a digital comic strip game with celebrities providing the voices. Noses be available to buy in special surprise bags.

For more information visit rednoseday.com, where all ticket and venue information can be found.

Sir Lenny will also been seen in a dramatic role in the new series of Broadchurch on ITV.

Traders backing call to help independent shops

A BUSINESSWOMAN has called for Dudley Council to 'step up' measures to bring more shoppers into Dudley town centre

Mary Law, a chiropodist who also runs the Arc-Aid charity shop in New Street, has written to council bosses expressing fears that more independent shops could go out of business or move on.

Mrs Law has also gained signatures from fellow traders supporting her call for more improvements in the town centre. It comes after Dudley stalwarts Walter Smith Butchers shut a shop in the Churchill Shopping Centre after more than 30 years.

Concerns have also recently been raised about the number of traders at Dudley's street market.

Mrs Law, in her letter, stated: "If we become a ghost town it will affect all the small traders. It has gone slow after Christmas, like it always does, but this is the time now that we really need to support each other. We all struggle to meet overheads."

Stephen Briscoe, from Dudley Civic Society, said: "We need more and more shops to bring more positivity to the town. The real problem is that Dudley does not have a supermarket and that would definitely bring footfall to the town and stop independent traders from struggling."

Best

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development, promised shoppers and traders that redevelopment and retail was still at the heart of the town's future.

He said: "Dudley is a popular and busy market town, which has a great mixture of retail and tourism offer at its very heart.

"We are always working to get the very best for Dudley. That is why we have a number of successful regeneration programmes for the town.

"A total of £200m of public sector spend has been agreed for within a mile of Dudley's centre.

"The successful Townscape Heritage Initiative has seen the restoration of 17 historic buildings."

"More than 135 new jobs created and safeguarded. Seven new business start-ups have also been ssisted in the town."

Join up by order of the Peaky Blinders

Shelby brothers – gangster drama Peaky Blinders ignited a craze for 1920s style caps and pocket watches

HOW do you fancy starring in the next series of Peaky Blinders?

Well this could be your chance.

If you're a young man in good physical shape and handy with your fists, you may be in luck.

Casting calls have been advertised for a 'pivotal role' in series four of the 1920s-set TV drama about Brummie gangsters, which has become an international hit via Netflix.

No previous acting experience is required but you do need to be between the ages of 18 to 25 and be able to box. The call has been put out on several posters in gyms around Birmingham. It reads: "Must be a confident boxer and physically fit."

Those who fit the role are asked to email pb4casting@gmail.com.

The last time there was an open casting call for Peaky Blinders, hundreds queued for up to a mile around the block in Digbeth to audition for two roles.

Harry Kirton from Northfield, then 15, was chosen to play the youngest Shelby brother, Finn.

And Jordan Bolger from Coventry became gang member Isiah, the son of preacher Jeremiah Jones, played by Benjamin Zephaniah.

Filming for series four starts in March, with creator Steven Knight saying last month that scripts had been finalised.

The crew are also expecting to film at the Black Country Living Museum again.

UKIP's Bill questioned on funding by Eurocrats

EURO MP Bill Etheridge has revealed he has been questioned by European Union investigators over accusations that UKIP MEPs have breached EU funding rules.

Up to eight of the party's MEPs are being investigated by the European Parliament for allegedly breaking rules that ban EU-funded assistants from working for the national party.

Past and current UKIP leaders Nigel Farage and Paul Nuttall are among those who are being investigated.

West Midlands MEP Mr Etheridge, who is also a Dudley Council member for Sedgley, said he has been questioned over 'a number of matters' that he says were 'easily disproved'.

Reports suggest UKIP could be asked to pay back up to £500,000 if the party is found to have breached EU regulations.

Accusation

Mr Etheridge said: "Every single accusation is being put to us as a party in an official way, and at the moment there is no concession that we have to pay anything back.

"I have been asked about a number of matters but any accusations have been easily disproved. I am completely relaxed about is all. Most of it appears to be something of a fishing exercise."

Under EU rules, full-time MEP assistants are not allowed to do paid work for a national political party

UKIP has confirmed that it plans to appeal every one of the allegations against the party.

Going Gaga for Brum concert date

POP superstar Lady Gaga will be coming to the West Midlands later this year, as details of the pop superstar's world tour were announced.

She is lined up to play at the Barclaycard Arena on October 15. Tickets go on sale tomorrow (Friday) and are expected to sell out fast.

The announcement of Lady Gaga's new Joanne tour comes on the back of her Superbowl half-time performance which was watched by hundreds of millions of TV viewers around the world on Sunday.

Her fifth studio album Joanne was her fourth consecutive chart-topping album

Tickets for the Barclaycard Arena date go on general sale from 9am at www.theticketfactory.com or by calling 0844 33 88 222.

Lecture on history of drinking water

VISITORS are welcome to hear how the Black Country first got clean water at a Black Country Society lecture by David Moore, chairman of Lichfield Waterworks Trust, on February 22 at Dudley Canal Trust venue The Portal, off Birmingham New Road, at 7.30pm.

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Woman died after crash near Merry Hill shops

A WOMAN who was seriously injured when she ended up underneath a car in a crash on a busy route near Merry Hill has died.

Officers have arrested a 23-year-old man, from Brierley Hill, on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving.

An appeal has been launched for the owners of a white Audi TT, a white Citroen DS and a white Seat Ibiza seen on Pedmore Road, Brierley Hill, at the time of the two-car smash to come forward to help the investigation.

Police shut Pedmore Road, in Brierley Hill, near the shopping centre on Friday afternoon after being called to the junction with The Gateway at around 2pm, following the crash between a black Ford Focus ST and a blue Ford Mondeo.

A 74-year-old woman, who was a passenger in the Mondeo, was taken to hospital with severe head and spinal injuries.

West Midlands Ambulance Service said she had been found underneath one of the cars by paramedics who treated her. Police confirmed she had later died from her injuries.

Her 85-year-old husband, who was driving, also received hospital treatment for minor injuries but was later discharged.

Sergeant Alan Wood said: "The investigation is in its early stages and enquiries will continue.

Call Sgt Wood or his team at the regional collision investigation unit on 101.

Supermarket giant buys Co-op store

ASDA have announced plans to buy the Co-op store in the centre of Sedgley.

The popular shop is located on High Holborn road and Asda have agreed to offer existing staff at the supermarket the opportunity to continue to work in the store.

The Travel hub will relocate to new premises on Dudley Street before the end of March.

A spokesperson said: "This acquisition will provide local shoppers and families with more choice and access to Asda's famously low prices.

"We're pleased to be welcoming existing Co-op colleagues into the Asda family."

The new Asda branded store is due to open its doors later this year.

Van and car in junction collision

A VAN was badly damaged in a crash on a Sedgley road. The accident involved a VW Polo and a Peugeot Sprinter van at the junction of Gospel End Street and The Priory at around 1.15pm on Monday. No-one was hurt.

Call for pupils to get involved with firms

A NEW youth chamber to involve young people in the Black Country in influencing the business world has been launched.

The Black Country Chamber of Commerce has set it up to involve pupils from academies and secondary schools.

Chamber chief executive Corin Crane said the first meeting was held at the Q3 Academy in Great Barr involving two representatives each from Walsall Academy, Windsor High School in Halesowen and Highfields School, Wolverhampton.

University of Wolverhampton business studies graduate Grant Mace chaired the initial meeting. He said: "From speaking to our member businesses many are really keen to work more closely with schools and involve young people. A lot of them want their workforce to be younger and more diverse and many want to give something back to the local area."

He explained that the ideas coming from the new youth chamber would be fed into the parent chamber.

Exciting

"The initial meeting discussed what the chamber package for schools should be and what young people wanted from businesses.

"There was a clear view that schools want to see more exciting speakers from a more diverse range of businesses coming out to visit them as well as more behind the scenes visits to our bigger business members," said Mr Crane.

The youth chamber has also suggested the establishment of question time sessions with local businesses and Dragons' Den style events.

"The youth chamber also wants to see more done to engage the imagination of young people ," he added.

Mr Crane said the youngsters could also have an important role in working with the main chamber and members in creating social media strategies.

Schools that would like to get involved with the youth chamber can contact the chamber schools co-ordinator Catrin Guy on 01902 912305 or via e-mail to catringuy@blackcountrychamber.co.uk

Hackers target schools, NHS and pub in attack

A CYBER attack was launched against schools, pubs and an NHS trust in the Black Country by hackers claiming to support the Kurdish army

Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Board was among the organisations targeted.

All Saints Primary School in West Bromwich, Perton Middle School in Wolverhampton and The Holly Bush pub in Cradley Heath were also hacked, as was Staffordshireshortbreaks.co.uk

The messages show that those who hacked the website then state 'long live to peshmarga' and a Kurdish flag. They also come with message 'Kurdish Hackers Was Here'.

The peshmerga is the army of Kurdish fighters in northern Iraq, which are currently fighting ISIS in both Iraq and Syria.

It is believed the hackers managed to break in via outdated versions of WordPress, a website provider.

Alerted

All Saints Primary School headteacher Jackie Beech was alerted about the cyber attack by a parent.

Ms Beech said: "We told our IT team and it was quickly taken down."

On Staffordshireshortbreaks.co.uk, the hackers attacked a holiday review posted in May last year.

It is hosted by Laurels Tech Web Design. Owner Phil Tester said he believed the site was hacked as the WordPress software had not been updated but the problem had been fixed.

Also targeted was the website for the Holly Bush in Newtown Lane, Cradley Heath. Owner Dave Francis said: "I find it slightly amusing, I've got nothing against the Kurds. I'm happy for them to love the Bush."

He said his website was designed by a friend.

He added: "It is scary to think what else they can hack, such as bank accounts."

University of Wolverhampton maths and computing principal lecturer Tony Proctor, who specialises in cyber security, said the problem was often linked to websites using out of date software.

He said: "Websites using out of date software do so at their peril. The hackers will often look for out of date software which leaves websites vulnerable. It is important users make sure they have the latest update."

Dogged devotion is recognised

Mariann Bayliss 12, with her dog Ila, has been nominated for an award at Crufts for showing canine compassion

A YOUNG dog lover has been nominated for an award at this year's Crufts show.

Mariann Bayliss, aged 12, has been put forward for the Shaun McAlpine outstanding young person prize. The award honours the efforts, compassion and devotion to dogs shown by members of the Young Kennel Club.

Her mother Jolene Bayliss said: "I am very proud of her. She has done all the hard work herself. She loves dogs and really enjoys being able to raise money for charities which help them."

Mariann, who lives in Stourbridge, was persuaded by her family and friends to begin selling items she had made for her dogs, including dog bandannas and neckerchiefs.

This year Mariann, who attends Redhill School, raised £180 for the Cinnamon Trust and Agility Against Cancer from selling handmade toys and leads. She was named Young Kennel Club fundraiser of the year with the chance to join her fellow nominees at Birmingham's NEC Arena on March 12. The overall winner, chosen by an online vote on Facebook, will receive a £750 prize, as well as a YKC ambassador's award.

As well as going for the award, Mariann will also be competing in the dog agility, jumping and flyball events.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Well-wishers back football hero Chris

MESSAGES of support have gone out to Walsall football star Chris Marsh after it was revealed he suffered a brain haemorrhage. The 47-year-old made over 400 appearances for the club.

Chris Marsh

Marsh, who grew up in Sedgley, joined Saddlers as a trainee in 1986 and won promotion in 1995 and 1999 before leaving in March 2001 – two months shy of another promotion.

Walsall's official account tweeted: "Club wish Saddlers legend & former @ntfc star Chris Marsh a speedy recovery after learning of pre Xmas brain haemorrhage #getwellsoon"

Zoo cleans up neighbouring site

DUDLEY Zoo has extended its work with native species by helping clear a piece of important ecological land on its doorstep.

Working alongside Dudley Countryside Services, the zoo's conservation officer Chris Leeson helped with work at Peggy's Meadow – located between the attraction and the Black Country Living Museum. Mr Leeson said: "The land is a natural meadow and is listed as a site of local importance for nature conservation, as well as being a home for rare orchids in the past, which we hope will return. It had become overgrown."

The zoo's three giraffes benefited from the work, as the team sent them a pile of branches to chew, while smaller branches will be climbing aids in the small primate enclosures.

Cricket club make anniversary plea

A CRICKET club, which is celebrating its 175th anniversary this year, is appealing for local companies to get behind its celebrations.

Stourbridge Cricket Club is planning a series of events to celebrate its landmark year including matches against Worcestershire Cricket Club legends, The MCC and an invitational XI versus Worcestershire County Cricket Club.

Now it is appealing for local companies to show their support in the special anniversary program or by donation prizes for a grand raffle.

For further information, contact Mark Ashbourne on 07506 747619 or email ma004g2691@blueyonder.co.uk

Hickory's rebuild bid

AN APPLICATION to rebuild the Hickory's Smokehouse restaurant which was destroyed by fire at Wall Heath has been formally made.

It is the next stage in the project to bring back the popular restaurant at the site of the former Kingfisher club. Clearance work started last month.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

WORD of Mouth (Radio 4) came from Birmingham and explained how the Midland expression blarting, meaning to cry, came from the word bleating. What it didn't explain was the expression an old Brummie mate of mine would use to describe someone who was upset: "She was blartin' like Friday." Why Friday? Any ideas?

THE most fascinating aspect about the online petition against a state visit for Donald Trump is the geographical breakdown. The areas with the highest rates of people signing the petition are London, Cambridge, Oxford, Glasgow and Edinburgh – pretty much identical to the results of last June's referendum on the European Union. If you're against Trump, you may well be against Brexit. And you're probably in a minority.

THE strangest thing about Donald Trump's "Muslim ban" is not that it's racist or Islamophobic but that it is so stupid. Most US terrorism is committed by home-grown loonies who either have a US passport or none at all. Trying to keep out terrorists by banning visitors from certain countries is about as useful as a chocolate musket at the Alamo.

WE all make mistakes. There was no shame in a misspelt BBC News commentary which popped up on our screens this week referring to "grievious bodily harm." But it was a little alarming that "grievious" was on screen for at least two hours and no-one in BBC News either noticed or corrected it.

THIS is probably not the right health message to take from the death of John Hurt, as we try hard to stick to two or three units of alcohol per day, plus a booze-free day every week. But we are told that at his worst, Hurt was slinging seven bottles of wine a night down his neck. He still made it to 77.

YOU know how it is. Your car lets you down and you start looking at the used-car ads. I found a nice little runner which seemed excellent in all respects, except the number plate. It begins with an N, has an 0 in the middle and ends NCE. You see the problem?

AND talking of booze, farewell to our Christmas cake. Mrs Rhodes's 2016 masterpiece was steeped in rum and spent the final weeks of its life fermenting merrily in the cake tin. I swear the last few slices were slightly fizzy and left the mouth numb, like a dentist's injection. The trouble with such epic cakes is that you know, no matter how hard you try to repeat the recipe, it will never be the same again. As Richard Harris told us.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

New nurse helpers go into training

MORE than 100 old-style auxiliary nurses will be trained to work across the Black Country and Staffordshire when a course is launched this month.

The group, who will study at the University of Wolverhampton, are among the first wave of trainees in the UK following the Government's announcement a year ago that it was creating a new nursing support role.

To be known as 'nursing associates', they will work alongside healthcare support workers and qualified nurses focusing on patient care. The move is part of a wider plan to diversify and expand the NHS workforce.

Gap

The role aims to bridge the gap between healthcare workers and registered nurses, enabling nurses to spend more time on clinical duties and take more of a lead in decisions about patient care.

Eleven test areas were chosen by Health Education England to deliver the first wave of training with The University of Wolverhampton's bid the only one in the West Midlands.

Led by Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, the partnership with the university covers an area including Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell and West Birmingham, Walsall and Staffordshire. The candidates were drawn from across the same areas.

A second batch of trainees will start a course in April. Students will be given experience in a range of healthcare settings over two years as they work towards a Foundation Degree (Sci) Nursing Associate.

Patient pressures push hospitals over limit

By Richard Guttridge

EVERY hospital in the Black Country had more than the recommended number of patients on their wards at the end of last month, new figures show.

Hospitals are meant to have no more than 85 per cent of beds filled under NHS safety guidelines but four West Midlands trusts had 94 per cent or more occupied as hospitals struggled to cope with winter pressures.

Trusts in Wolverhampton, Dudley and Walsall all had 94 per cent bed occupancy rates on that day, the figures from NHS England showed.

Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, which runs Sandwell General, had the most beds available, but with 88 per cent full was still over the boundary set by NHS chiefs.

Hospitals are supposed to stay below the 85 per cent target in order to minimise the risk of infections and delays in getting treatment.

At the Dudley Group, which runs Russells Hall, the figure was 682 out of 723 and at Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, which runs Walsall Manor, it was 504 out of 533.

Sandwell's trust fared slightly better, with 625 of 706 taken, according to the figures.

At the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, which runs New Cross, 718 of 760 were occupied.

Struggles

It meant under-pressure hospitals had little room to spare for patients filing into A&E. The figures shed more light on the struggles of the region's hospitals.

Bosses at Russells Hall in Dudley said they have seen record numbers coming into A&E this winter, while the number of patients being treated within four hours at Sandwell General has plummeted in recent months.

The figures show bed occupancy rates are not just an issue in the West Midlands with137 out of 152 hospital trusts above the level since the start of December.

Restoration project on banks of canal

The stretch of the Stourbridge Canal which is to be transformed. Picture: Lloyd Stacey, director of Riverside House

A STRETCH of canal in Stourbridge will be transformed, under new plans.

The work to the canal towpath will include removing graffiti, managing the trees and undergrowth, brightening up brick work and restoring the historic interpretation panel.

The stretch of canal is situated next to the Foster Rastrick Ironworks, a factory in the 19th century which includes the recently restored New Foundry, now the Lion Health Medical Centre.

The canal-side transformation by the Riverside House group is part of the Canal and River Trust's adoption scheme. It will provide opportunities for adults in health and social care and help individuals develop work skills, communication skills, confidence and employability skills.

Lloyd Stacey, director of Riverside House, said: "This is an opportunity to become involved in an exciting historical regeneration project that be of will benefit to the whole community. It will be the first of many projects that will be happening in the area.

"We have been working on this for around a month now and its great to be working with different groups who may not be in employment or have learning disabilities.

"We are aiming for around 400 yards of the path along the canal to be smartened up outside the ironworks."

The site also includes the base of an historic crane.

Arson probe after van is gutted in late night blaze

AN ARSON investigation is underway after a van was found alight on a main road near Stourbridge.

West Midlands Fire and Rescue confirmed they attended the blazing vehicle on Wassell Grove Lane in Wollescote just before midnight on Sunday.

Ten firefighters tackled the flames and Dudley Highways also had to be called out after the water from the hoses froze in the sub-zero temperatures and the road had to be gritted.

Two crews from Oldbury and Haden Cross attended the scene along with West Midlands Police officers who are now carrying out an arson investigation.

A spokesman for West Midlands Fire said: "We were called out at 11.58pm to Wassell Grove Road in Wollescote, after West Midlands Police reported that there was a large vehicle on fire.

"It was a transit van located close to some fisheries.

"Ten firefighters in two fire engines attended. It was well alight on a main road, and firefighters used breathing apparatus and hose reel jets.

"It was later identified as a Nissan van which had been completely destroyed by the fire.

"Highways had to be called to attend and grit the road, because there was water on the road from our jets which froze in the sub-zero temperatures.

"Police stayed to investigate the arson,and our last crew left the scene at 12.40am."

Work is under way on M&S food store

BUILDING work is currently under way on a Marks & Spencer food store at a petrol station on the outskirts of Stourbridge town centre.

The BP garage, on Hagley Road, will feature the food store as well as a Wild Bean Cafe.

There are currently more than 250 similar shops at garages across the UK.

The newly-refurbished garage is due to open later this year.

A BP spokesman said the conversion would create new jobs, but it was not yet known how many.

The BP M&S shop will open later this year.

At the end of last year it was announced that M&S was planning to shut 30 clothing and homeware shops across the UK.

Gas mains work means traffic lights on route

TEMPORARY traffic lights will be operating on a major route in Stourbridge until February 24.

Gas mains work is being carried out on Worcester Lane, Stourbridge, which connects Hagley Road to the Birmingham Road.

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Health trust spend £32m on digital record move

THE Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust is investing £32 million over the next 10 years to develop a full electronic patient record.

A contract has been signed between the trust and American company Allscripts, to deliver a new digital record system known as 'Sunrise Clinicals' which includes the capability to share records with patients.

Dudley Group acting chief executive, Dr Paul Harrison said "This is the biggest investment in IT the trust has ever made and is an exciting development for everyone.

"The work to transform Dudley into a digital trust will revolutionise the way we work, delivering more effective and safer clinical care.

"This will save money to spend on frontline services, and free up more time for us to spend with patients.

"There are significant benefits for patients. The system will ensure all information about a patient's treatment is available anywhere across the trust at any time of the day or night. This will support clinical decisions, helping to increase the reliability and consistency of the care we offer, and enable relevant clinical information to be shared with the patient, their GP and other organisations responsible for looking after them."

Dr Harrison added: "We have spent the last two years ensuring that we have selected the right system by talking with clinicians and other health care professionals, and building a robust and secure IT infrastructure to support this project."

Calls to help those leaving hospital

PATIENTS aged over 65 in Dudley will now receive a telephone call after being discharged from hospital to see if they need support at home.

Care co-ordinators employed the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust will lead the initiative.

They will provide links between Russells Hall Hospital, the borough's GPs and various community-based services to help people live independently at home.

Paul Bytheway, chief operating officer for the trust, said: "Care co-ordinatorscan ensure vulnerable patients feel settled once they are out of hospital and back at home."

The co-ordinators will be based at the Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre.

Police discover cannabis plants

A CANNABIS farm with more than 300 plants was uncovered in Dudley following a tip-off. Police confirmed that they had discovered the plants hidden behind bricks in the loft of Wolverhampton Street property.

Family centres to be run by schools

CASH-STRAPPED Dudley Council is proposing a restructure that would see it ceasing to fund 15 of its 20 children's centres, in a move to cut £1.4 million from its family service budget.

The centres offer families a host of activities plus get access to information and support.

Five of the centres – Brierley Hill, Stourbridge, Coseley, Kates Hill and Lye – will remain with the local authority and convert to become family centres in the new restructure.

The remaining 15 will transfer to schools with a clear specification from the council that the centres must continue in the same way – saving the council £177,000.

The move is part of their wider restructuring of the Family Solutions service which could save the local authority a total of £1.4m.

In 2013 the council announced it would close seven centres, but following a campaign by the public to save them, council bosses did a U-turn and decided to keep them open.

In 2014 the council announced that 19 jobs at the centres were at risk and centres' hours and services were reduced.

Since December, Tenterfields and Hob Green children's centres have been the first to transfer to their respective schools, and will be shortly followed by Colley Lane.

The next centres prioritised are those going for academy conversion, and will therefore move out of local authority control, at Woodside and at Olive Hill.

Councillor Ian Cooper, cabinet member for children's services said: "Our children's centres provide universal support to local families and under our new proposals this support will be targeted exactly where it is needed.

"The council will continue to run five of the centres, while handing over the reins of the remaining 15 to schools who are perfectly placed to provide these services to families in their communities. The new family service provision will provide a stronger, more efficient and improved service."

But Councillor Paul Brothwood feared it would put more pressure on schools.

Fury as council staff lose free parking pass

ANGRY staff are in dispute with Dudley Council over proposed plans to make them pay for parking, among several changes to their terms and conditions of employment.

Council workers have contacted their trade union over the proposals, which could affect 280 employees.

In December it was announced that councillors could take a cut in their allowances as the local authority continues to look for new ways to make £25 million of savings, which bosses say have been imposed on them by reduced Government funding.

The plans also include three days of unpaid annual leave to be taken over the Christmas period.

Proposals to reduce the mileage allowance from 55p to 45p per mile have also been discussed. More than £8m was paid in mileage in the last five years.

Negotiations with the Unite union are ongoing following the proposed changes to terms and conditions for all paid staff.

Brian Rickers, Unite regional officer, said: "The trade unions are currently in dispute with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, which is making a concerted attempt to attack our members' terms and conditions by slashing mileage allowances and ceasing funding for staff car parking passes.

Business

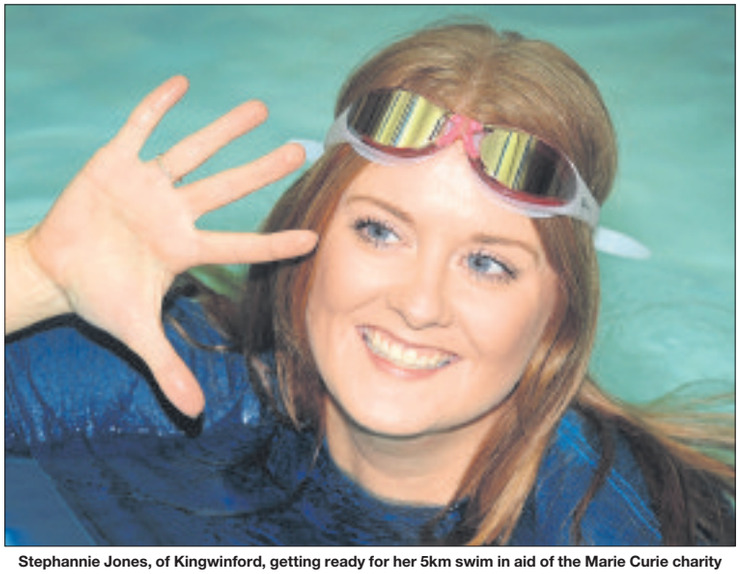
"This will mean that staff will be required to pay for parking at council-owned car parks. Many staff need their cars to get to work and, therefore, need spaces to park. In many cases, employees use their vehicles on council business during their working day.

"We are not going to stand idly by while the council bosses salami-slice our members' employment conditions. Council workers have received minimal pay raises in recent years and, at a time when inflation is picking up because of the slump in the value of the pound due to the Brexit referendum result, their living standards in real terms have been eroded."

Leader of the Labour-run authority, Councillor Pete Lowe, said he would cut his own allowance by 10 per cent while other councillors would lose five per cent.

Unite was due to hold a consultative ballot of its 170 council members with the result due yesterday (Wednesday). The council is due to make a decision on February 27.

Daughter makes a splash for charity



Stephannie Jones, of Kingwinford, getting ready for her 5km swim in aid of the Marie Curie charity

A FUNDRAISER who has not been in a swimming pool for 15 years is to complete 200 lengths in aid of the charity Marie Curie.

The 27-year-old who hasn't been in a pool since the age of 12 is set to swim to raise money for the charity after her mother was diagnosed with cancer.

Stephannie Jones will swim 5km for Marie Curie after the charity helped her mother, Helen Randell, who was previously a Marie Curie nurse. She was given the all-clear two years ago.

Stephannie, from Kingswinford, has taken part in the Race for Life for the past two years. The worker at Sadler's brewery in Lye said: "When my mum was diagnosed the nurses from Marie Curie really helped. They offered our family support to make sure we could cope and made sure my mum knew what her next steps were."

She added: "I started training for it this week. I did 20 lengths in 20 minutes and I was absolutely exhausted so doing 200 is going to be quite a challenge.

Sadler's Brewery will also be running a fundraising night to help her reach her £1,000 goal on March 7.

The swim will take place on April 9 in Wolverhampton.

To donate text SJJS94 with the amount of money to 70070.

NEWS IN BRIEF

63 homes planned on overgrown land

A DEVELOPMENT of more than 60 homes is being earmarked for vacant land near a beauty spot in Quarry Bank.

The plans, which are for 63 homes off Rose Hill, near to Saltwells Local Nature Reserve, have been submitted to Dudley Council.

The proposal would include the construction of one and two-bedroom apartments and houses with two, three and four bedrooms.

The development covers 1.62 hectares of land, large parts of which are currently covered by vegetation.

Bus tour to focus on healthy eyes

PEOPLE can find about more about sight loss, thanks to a dedicated information bus from Sedgley's Beacon Centre, which is touring the region to spread the word about eye health.

People who hop on board will be able to find out more about the work of the centre, as well as how sight-loss issues could affect them.

The Beacon Bus will be at Ashwood Nurseries, near Kingswinford, on Saturday and Wombourne Library on Thursday (February 16).

For more information contact 01902 886785.

Law firm's boost for association

CHARITY fundraisers at a law firm have raised more than £23,000 for the Stroke Association.

Staff at Higgs & Sons, in Brierley Hill, raised £23,994.66 with a series of events and challenges. The previous year staff managed to collect £17,000 for charity.

Fundraising events were held throughout the year including quizzes, runs, bake-offs, concerts and a 10th anniversary football tournament that saw 48 teams take part.

Ultimate disco night in aid of volunteers

A DISCO will be held in tonight (Friday) at Brierley Hill Civic Hall.

The doors for the fundraising Ultimate Decades Disco will open at 8pm. There will be large video screens and a mix of retro and modern sounds.

Funds raised by the event will be donated to Dudley Voluntary Services.

Tickets cost £6 on the door for the over 18s event, which features a happy hour until 9pm and will go on to 1am.

A Motown-Northern Soul disco and an 80s-90s night are also planned.

Women's race invite

WOMEN are being encouraged to lace up their running shoes for this year's Race for Life at Himley Hall.

Cancer Research UK has called for women to join the popular 5km event on July 9.

To sign up, visit www.raceforlife.org or call 0300 123 0770.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Slippers at school is just a step too far

THE headmistress of a school in Derbyshire has come up with a, ahem, unconventional approach to school uniform.

Emma Titchener is encouraging youngsters to wear slippers in the classroom, saying it makes them more relaxed.

Yeah I bet it does. What next? Novelty onesies?

Actually, having seen the pictures of Findern Primary School, that wouldn't come as a total surprise. It certainly appears to have a laid-back approach to education.

One of the photos shows a couple of children relaxing on a bright-red sofa. Another shows a teacher in furry footwear sat in front of a giant flat-screen telly. It looks more like a slightly tacky health spa than a place of learning.

Now I don't suppose it ever occurred to Mrs Titchener, but in a few years' time it will fall to the same children's teachers at secondary school to persuade them to dress smartly, and convince them that slobbing around in slippers will not be acceptable in the workplace.

Perhaps it is all part of a cunning plan, the hope being that by the time teenage rebellion sets in, they will all angrily insist on shiny black brogues instead.

A study by Bournemouth University says a casual approach to footwear also reduces bullying. Hmm, forgive my scepticism, but not sure that would work in the Black Country.

Still, it probably hurts a lot less when they kick one another's heads in.

❒❒❒

RATIONING is back, well sort of. Due to inclement conditions in southern Europe, Tesco has restricted its customers to a maximum of three iceberg lettuces each.

However will we manage? Now I thought iceberg was a nasty alcohol-free wine which I once bought by accident when I was 17. Can't tell you how impressed my friends waiting outside the off-licence were.

But it appears that a touch of frost in Spain means some of us will have to go a few weeks without flavourless, watery leaves.

And just as everybody felt the need to queue for five hours at Don Miller's when the bakers went on strike in the late 70s – going a couple of days without toast was unthinkable, wasn't it? – you can bet that somewhere there will be reports of people brawling over who has the last salad.

It reminds me a bit of the episode of Open All Hours, when Arkwright found himself lumbered with a job lot of Jamaican ginger cake.

So he limited sales to one loaf per customer, and everyone was clamouring for it.

Lee eventually got the picture he wanted at Mount Olympus

Lee in Latvia, the highest point is 90m less than the Wrekin

Lee seen at the highest point in the gardens at Vatican City

Roofer Lee hitting the heights across globe

Lee Humpries is on target to reach 100 highest points in countries across the globe. **HEATHER LARGE** reports

MOUNTAIN climber and intrepid traveller Lee Humphries is a man on a mission as he continues his quest to stand on the highest point in 100 different countries.

The 34-year-old, from Bilston, is travelling across Europe, Africa, South America and Asia as part of his challenge.

So far he has crossed 40 off his list and scaled Mount Olympus in Cyprus, Har Meron in Israel and Gaizinkalns in Latvia in recent months.

Self-employed roofer Lee has set himself the target of reaching another 20 by the end of 2017 with the aim of getting to 100 by 2019.

His dedication to his challenge was shown in Cyprus where he faced a few hurdles in achieving his goal of climbing Mount Olympus.

Summit

"I could see the Starbrook wide field telescope on the summit and the RAF Troodos military compound accompanied with several signs showing a camera with a cross through it," he said.

"As with other military compounds, I was aware of the photography issue but it does conflict at times with me taking a photo on the high point or highest legal point.

"I pushed on past two small manned outposts and heading briskly towards the main gates. By this point I had already taken my camera out and took a super fast selfie.

"I went to take another and a heard a man shout 'Oi no photographs" in a very British voice. I turned around as my back was to the compound and said no problem and that I was climbing to the highest point in 100 countries, and would take a photo of me and the view not the facility.

"I continued back down the path but I wasn't satisfied. I stopped and thought of other pictures I had seen showing people closer to the summit.

"I planned to head back up to the top but to the opposite side of the military facility.

"There was a ski slope and another small manned box but this time unoccupied.

"I made my move and quickly jogged to the fence close to the summit where I had seen the other photos taken."

Gaizinkalns, which at 312 metres above sea level is the highest point in Latvia

His recent travels have included a trip to Vatican City in Rome, a place where he had to visit two sites to ensure he was at the highest point – and where he found patience was also key to his success.

"The Vatican lies entirely within Rome and is the world's smallest sovereign state in terms of size and population.

"The highest natural point lies in the Vatican gardens which are only accessible as part of a group tour.

"There is also a discrepancy regarding which is the actual higher point out of two areas within the gardens, so I really needed to go to both.

"There are a lot of variables when on a guided tour that I had no control over and on several occasions nearly decided to quickly slip away from the group as we passed very close to the high points before continuing on.

Elbrus

"Thankfully the tour guide was thorough and took in the Vatican radio station and other high points. so I was able to take photos."

Among the high points on the agenda for the year are Suur Munamägi, the highest peak in Estonia at 1,043ft, Balanesti in Moldova, which stands at 1,410ft, and the 1,130 ft high hill Hara Dzyarzhynskaya in Belarus.

He is also planning a trip to Mount Elbrus in Russia, Europe's highest peak, as well as Halti in Finland, Fan Si Pan in Vietnam and Halla-San in South Korea.

During his adventures around the world he has had to deal with high temperatures, driving rain and even military gunfire in Croatia when he went to climb Dinara.

He has also visited Kekes in Hungary, Dingli Cliffs in Malta and Mount Titano in San Marino.

To follow Lee's adventures visit www.100countryhighpoints.com or follow him on Twitter .

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Be positive, prepare for a bright new world

I AM getting fed up to the back teeth with the negative attitude of some people about exiting the European Union.

These to me fall in one or more of the following categories – never had a proper job, consumed by dogma or poorly educated.

An example of this is the person who said we had a referendum and chose the wrong option, a definitive statement (dogma), gave no sense of reasoning for the statement! When asked why we should remain it was to protect jobs and business.

Our business has declined, in some ways, as a result of our membership of the EU. At Longbridge we had a buoyant car company employing large numbers of local workers. This was sold to BMW, a German company, who stripped the assets taking the most successful model. This vehicle is now made in Germany. HP Sauce is now made on the continent, also steel making ceased in Bilston – these are just three examples.

As members of the EU we have to allow all members to tender for contracts to supply goods and services. Are European companies helped by their Governments? Outside this organisation, we could keep this work at home.

The court case which has just been heard has in fact only put money in lawyers' pockets and achieves nothing, as there was always going to be some discussion about triggering Article 50.

At present we are like a pupa in a chrysalis, to these negative people. I say look forward to breaking out of this into a bright new world where we are free to explore all opportunities that are available to us.

DOUGLAS WINTERBORN
Brierley Hill

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Dudley Chronicle,
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Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
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All about money for top clubs

IT seems that even the football experts on BBC television have noticed at last that all the 'big' clubs care about is money!

Alan Shearer is quoted as saying that with all the changes made by Premier League clubs – an average of over seven per team – are cheating fans out of a cup run.

When it's worth about £100 million to each club in the Premier League just to be there it's no surprise. What is a surprise is that it's taken this long for football experts to admit this.

With both BT and Sky seeing falling viewer numbers for their matches this year how much longer will these commercial businesses continue subsidising the Premier League? Only as long as they're making money from it. What then? We'll see if the so-called 'best league' in the world can continue to attract some of the best players.

M GOUGH
Wombourne

NHS – doing nothing really not an option

AS a retired NHS employee I follow the arguments re funding and the ability to cope with demand for health care. We should not be surprised by the current situation. We only have to look at some of the fundamental changes that various Governments have implemented which have largely brought about this crisis.

There are 51 percent less beds that there were in 1998. The daily bed availability in 1998 was 300,000. Today that figure is slightly under 150,000. Everyone can name hospitals that no longer exist. The GP service has been allowed to shrink with no 'on call' availability for many.

If we genuinely cannot sustain or improve the current provision of health care there has to be significant change to the way in which the services are funded. To do nothing is simply not an option.

D COOK
Stourbridge

Sort out parking in Roseville

I DO as I always do every day at 11.45, I go into Roseville, Coseley, to get our daily needs, as I always favour using local shopping amenities.

On Tuesday there shouldn't be a problem parking. Much to my surprise not a parking space to be had. I went around again hoping there may be a gap somewhere – "NO". I ended up taking a chance on parking by the library on double yellow lines as many others had done, yes it is wrong, yes it is illegal, what else am I supposed to do?

I have health problems and when I did my shopping I was stunned as to where these people are shopping! It most certainly is not in Roseville. The culprits are those who do not wish to pay parking charges at Coseley station. Is it not about time that those who have been notified on numerous occasions take some action? Wake up Dudley Council!

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THE National Wedding Show has a spectacular line up for spring 2017, bringing the nation's most beautiful, stylish and inspiring wedding suppliers together under one roof.

It has the hottest names on the high street and independent boutiques. All the bridal party will be entertained with live music, food tastings, shopping hotspots and DIY classes, not to mention The Champagne Bar!

And the organisers have teamed up with the Chronicle series to put 30 pairs of tickets up for grabs for the show at Birmingham's NEC from March 3-5.

The Revlon Runway brings to life the latest trends for the bride, groom, mother-of-the-bride and the bridesmaids on the UK's largest bridal catwalk.

The biggest names in bridal design will showcase their latest collections including Jenny Packham, Vera Wang, David's Bridal, Alfred Angelo, Allure Bridals, Berketex Brides, Maggie Sottero, Maids to Measure, Debenhams, Coast, Phase Eight, Young's Hire, Moss Bros, Nigel Rayment, Katya Katya Shehurina, Cad & The Dandy, Ghost London, Ben De Lisi, and many more.

The National Wedding Show tours the country to bring brides-to-be their fashion-fix and the latest in stationery, honeymoons, beauty, plus so much more. It's the perfect place to shop for your entire wedding or if you are on a 'quest for the dress' head to the Bridal Boutique and Designer Boutique, to try on that dream dress and get advice.

The National Wedding show has a line-up of industry insiders to devour their passions at The Makeover Theatre, the home for hair, beauty and style advice.

Savile Row tailors from Cad & The Dandy and Yardsman lead the way for the boys and there is advice on accessories and even the honeymoon.

The NATIONAL WEDDING Show

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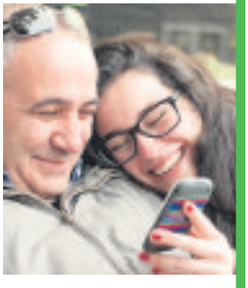

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Charity support vital for family hit by cancer

A 23-year-old mother is battling a rare form of cancer.

Grace Nkounkou-Issombe found out about her illness just weeks after she and husband Ambrose Ogbechie, of Crossgate Road, Dudley, welcomed their first child, Austin, into the world in May.

In July a biopsy on a lump on her right femur, previously diagnosed as benign, was identified as the result of the rare bone cancer, osteosarcoma.

Treatment started immediately at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. Grace said: "The cancer didn't shock me but the thought I might not be around for my son, well, that really hurt me deeply. It made me feel so low.

"Since then my husband has had to be the mum really as I've been in hospital a lot with the treatment and infections, as the chemo I'm having is intense. I miss Austin so much when I can't see him. I was in intensive care but I'm not ready to die."

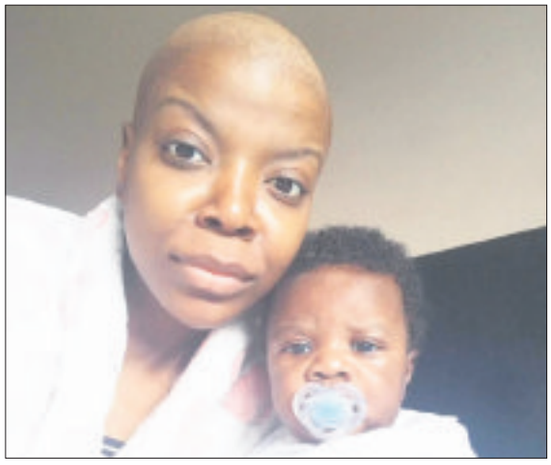
Worried

In December, alongside doctors, Grace made the difficult decision to have her leg amputated.

Grace and her family has received help from UK cancer charity CLIC Sargent. The Dudley mother is calling for people to support the CLIC Sargent charity to raise money for other patients and their families.

Grace added: "When I met my CLIC Sargent social worker Sam I had no idea who he was. When he introduced himself as a social worker I felt really funny about it. Sam listened to the things I was most worried about, like paying our rent. Ambrose had to give up work to care for Austin and we were really struggling with money. But Sam knew everything about benefits."

For more information visit www.clicsargent.org.uk website.



Grace Nkounkou-Issombe, with son Austin, says she's not ready to die

Free cricket scheme arrives

CHILDREN aged eight to 16 can learn cricket skills and develop a passion for the sport thanks to a national programme that is coming to Dudley Leisure Centre.

The Wicketz project has been set up to help young people who live in areas where it may be difficult to access cricket facilities.

The Dudley Council-run venue on Wellington Road will host the free sessions, which are being delivered with Worcestershire Cricket Board, on Mondays from 5pm to 6pm for boys and girls of all abilities.

Councillor Khursid Ahmed, cabinet member for leisure, said: "Sport has the power to transform lives in many ways because it not only helps people to keep fit but also unites communities. Over 2,200 children have now engaged with cricket because of this fantastic programme and I'm delighted to see it starting up here in Dudley."

For details call (01384) 812800 or go to www.dudley.gov.uk/sport website.

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Pair of thugs attacked and robbed taxi driver

A TAXI driver has told how he feared he would be killed when he was brutally attacked by two passengers.

Sheakh Arbaz was punched repeatedly as he sat in the driver's seat waiting to be paid his fare.

His attackers only stopped when people emerged from nearby homes having been alerted by the driver's screams.

The thugs ran off with around £50 of the driver's takings, his mobile phone and car keys, leaving him stranded.

Mr Arbaz, who drives for ABM Taxis, had picked the pair up from his base in Stourbridge town centre at around 4.30am on Saturday.

They originally asked to be taken to The Village Hotel in Dudley before changing their minds and directing the driver to Hallchurch Road in Holly Hall, Dudley.

When Mr Arbaz pulled up he spotted one of the men trying to burn the back seat and asked what they were doing.

Grabbed

One then got out and approached the driver's side window. The father-of-four wound down his window expecting payment but the man grabbed his keys from the ignition and demanded money. He was then attacked.

Mr Arbaz, aged 43, said: "I thought I was going to be killed. If the neighbours had not heard I don't know if they would have stopped.

"I was hit three or four times, after that I don't remember. I was screaming for help."

Mr Arbaz was taken to Russells Hall Hospital for stitches in a gash on his face.

The passengers are described as white and in their early 20s. Police have asked for anyone with information to call them on 101.

A photo of Sheakh Arbaz after the attack. Picture by Shaz Saleem

Son in court after fatal crash

A MAN accused of causing the death of his father in a car crash has appeared in court.

Kuljinder Gakhal, aged 30, is alleged to have been driving a Jaguar car in which his father, Daljit Gakhal, was a passenger. The 52-year-old was killed in a crash between the car and a lorry at the junction of Birmingham New Road and Tipton Road, near the Black Country Living Museum, at about 10.30pm on May 20 last year.

Gakhal, of Thames Road, Slough, denied causing death by dangerous driving and failing to give permission for a test on a blood sample which had been taken from him, at Wolverhampton Crown Court last Thursday.

Gakhal was also treated in hospital for serious head injuries following the crash. The lorry driver was uninjured.

Gakhal was released on unconditional bail and will next appear at Wolverhampton Crown Court on October 16 for the start of his trial, which is expected to last up to five days.

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Family business tends graves on behalf of others

A FAMILY have set up a grave tending service for those who are too infirm or live too far away to do it themselves.

Neil O'Brien co-founded Driftwood Corner Graveside Tending Services some 18 months ago after he and his in-laws discussed the business idea in a pub.

Now the family keep graves neat and tidy and lay flowers for those who are unable to get there themselves.

Mr O'Brien said: "When you step back and see results it makes you feel fantastic. People who can't get to grave sites put their trust in us and we can show them what they've done for their loved ones."

The company offer a range of services from cleaning headstones and memorials to placing flowers at the graveside on behalf of loved ones.

They also offer a grave location service where they will use site records to locate lost graves so that relatives and loved ones can pay their respects.

Mr O'Brien is now hoping people whol ive overseas may be keen to use the service

The company is based in Stourbridge and offer their services within a 10 mile radius of the town. But they will travel to gravesides further away for an extra fee.

A survey service is available where they will obtain pictures and information of a grave for someone who may not have been able to visit.

Mr O'Brien said the majority of customers request a return service.

The service starts from £30. More information can be found at www.driftwoodcorner.co.uk or on their Facebook page.

Neil O'Brien tending a grave at St Mary's C of E Church in Rectory Road, Old Swinford

Smoking costing taxpayers millions

SMOKING costs councils in the Black Country and Staffordshire more than £50 million a year.

The Action on Smoking and Health group warns that the unhealthy habit is adding to the social care crisis by putting a burden on local authorities to fork out millions on care for people with smoking related illnesses.

In 2015/16 smokers in Dudley racked up the highest cost in the Black Country of £9.3m while Sandwell Council forked out £7.6m. In Walsall smoking cost the council £7.1m to deal with while in Wolverhampton it cost £6.9m.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "The effect of smoking on people's health and wellbeing inevitably has a significant impact on social care and other council services."

In Staffordshire the smoking bill clocked in at just over £20m including £1.9m in South Staffordshire.

The figures were been included in an all-party Parliamentary group Smoking and Health Report, published last month.

Politicians will clash over council tax increase

COUNCIL tax is set to rise by almost five per cent across Dudley.

Chiefs have announced plans to increase council tax by the maximum amount allowed without triggering a referendum, taking advantage of a Government decision relax laws on local tax hikes.

Councils had previously only been allowed to increase the amount by four per cent a year but can now go further to fund social care.

Budget proposals published in November, before the Government's announcement, had suggested Dudley Council would opt for a four per cent rise.

The 4.99 per cent increase would mean the average household paying £1.12 extra each week from April.

Three per cent will go towards social care and two per cent on funding other services.

The plans look set to spark a row at Dudley Council House as opposition councillors slammed the move.

The Labour-controlled council insisted the increase is necessary due to its dire financial state, which has left it needing to save £26 million over the next three years.

Councillor David Sparks

Block

The UKIP group insists the hike of almost five per cent would place too much of a burden on taxpayers.

Labour could fail to get the proposal passed as it does not command a majority at the council house. But that would require the Conservatives and UKIP to join forces to outnumber Labour councillors and thereby block the move.

Dudley Council's finance boss Councillor David Sparks said: "Any proposed increases in council tax are never taken lightly but we continue to find ourselves in unprecedented times of financial pressure as a result of reduced funding from national Government.

"I should also stress that if this is approved we will still be the lowest council tax rate in the Black Country and one of the lowest in the country, which means people in this borough continue to get sound financial planning and continued services for people who need them most – despite the extreme financial pressures."

Dudley's UKIP leader Councillor Paul Brothwood said the group would oppose the increase.

"After years of excessive waste in Dudley Council by multiple administrations the taxpayers of Dudley could be hit by an abhorrent tax rise," he said. "We accept there are pressures as result of generations of poor planning within the council and excessive waste but the target should be the waste and not Dudley residents.

"The Dudley UKIP Group will stand strong against this proposal to ensure tax payers are not ripped off."

Consultation will run until tomorrow (Friday) at www.dudley.gov.uk

Hospice boost on the cards

THE public have raised nearly £21,000 buying festive cards to support Mary Stevens Hospice.

The cards were available at each of the hospice's 20 charity shops across the region, as well as at the hospice on Hagley Road in Stourbridge.

In total, 7,500 packs of cards were sold, providing a huge boost to the charity.

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Views sought on medicine change

DUDLEY Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has launched a public consultation on the changes to prescriptions and allocation of medicines in Dudley.

Dudley CCG spend around £2 million per year on widely available, over-the-counter medicines, and GPs see many patients who have minor ailments that could be treated with remedies bought from a pharmacy, supermarket or shop.

The CCG are proposing to stop prescribing medicines for short-term conditions or minor ailments, or where there is no or low clinical value or cost-effectiveness.

Clair Huckerby, pharmaceutical adviser, said: "Dudley CCG advocates the prescription of products for which there is clear evidence of quality and effectiveness. Helping our patients to manage self-limiting conditions is a priority for us and we hope to work with local patients to develop this policy."

People can give their view by emailing contact@dudleyccg.nhs.uk

Support for covert cameras to combat fly-tipping menace

MPS have backed Dudley Council proposals to install spy cameras in a bid to catch fly-tippers.

Council bosses are reviewing several options, including hidden cameras, in a bid to crackdown on illegal rubbish being dumped in the borough, which is hitting council tax payers will huge clean up bills.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin, and Dudley South MP Mike Wood said they would welcome the initiative.

Fly-tipping is on the rise across Dudley, with the latest figures showing the council had been called to more than three cases per day.

The authority, which is facing cuts which it blames on getting less Government funding, spent almost £125,000 over the last three years tackling the mess left by fly-tippers.

Council leaders discussed the use of covert cameras at the last overview and scrutiny board committee meeting.

Conservative MP Mr Wood said: "Cameras have proved to be successful in getting prosecutions. Without cameras the council will be relying on catching fly-tippers in the act. I back the plans for the cameras."

Labour MP Mr Austin said: "I regularly hear from local people whose streets are hit time and again by fly-tipping, and I get on to the council to make sure it's reported and cleaned up."

He added: "I want to see the criminals creating this nuisance caught and brought to court, so I want to see local council's doing all they can to prevent the problem and take action against those responsible."

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "Fly tipping is a serious offence that costs our council tax payers thousands of pounds every year. We agreed to review all the options available to help deter and enforce against fly tipping in Dudley borough including CCTV where it is cost effective to do so.

"Incidents can be reported via Dudley Council Plus, the council's website or our mobile phone app, and we would like remind people that the council offers a special collection service for bulky items for residents and a commercial waste collection service."

The council was called to 570 incidents of rubbish dumping from April to September in 2016.

Deaf youngsters are urged to act

DEAF youngsters are being urged to enter an acting competition run by a charity.

Actress Genevieve Barr is calling on people to enter The National Deaf Children's Society's Raising the Bar competition. It is to show what deaf youngsters can achieve and make performing arts accessible for all.

The deaf actress, known for her role in BBC drama The Silence, said: "Teachers, family and friends encouraged me to keep working towards my dream – but sadly not everyone gets this support."

Budding deaf performers aged eight to18 have until February 12, to submit videos of their dance, drama, music or signed song routines.

Then 32 winners will attend a two-day masterclass with a live showcase at the Ruddock Arts Centre, in Birmingham, on April 23. Details at ndcs.org.uk/raisingthebar website.

Pedal power to combat cancer

Geared up – Stuart Henley from Halesowen is cycling 145 miles for prostate cancer charities

AN EPIC bicycle ride lies ahead for a Halesowen councillor who is planning to pedal 145-miles to Amsterdam in aid of prostate cancer research.

Councillor Stuart Henley is embarking on the challenging trip with his best friend, Bill Campbell, which will see them cycle from Yorkshire to Amsterdam in two days.

Councillor Henley is undertaking the challenge in order to raise money for Prostate Cancer UK. The charity was chosen as his father-in-law is battling the disease.

The aim is to raise £1,000 for the charity.

Councillor Henley said: "Bill talked me into joining him on the ride after a few beers, even though I haven't actually properly ridden a bike in around five years.

"I had a prostate cancer scare a few years ago too so I'm doing the ride to try and raise awareness. There are very few men that talk about the issue of prostate cancer, so I'm hoping to help get the word out there."

The pair will start their journey from Barnsley football ground on June 9 before arriving in Amsterdam the following day.

On the Saturday morning, the two will join many other cycling fundraisers on a ferry across to the Netherlands.

The 46-year-old added: "Training is going slow at the moment as I'm trying to balance things between work. It's a physical challenge too. I haven't been very active for too long and I want to use the challenge as a personal goal also.

"I've had quite a few sponsors so far and one of my friends has promised to sponsor me £1 per mile, which is great."

To sponsor Councillor Henley, visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/stuart-henley

Lots going on for children at centres

CHILDREN can take part in fun and games at Dudley and Halesowen leisure centres during half term.

The Dudley Council facilities will be hosting a week of fun from February 18 to 26.

On February 21 and 23 at Dudley Leisure Centre there will be two full days of 'junior activezone' action for children aged eight to 14. Running from 9am to 4pm, activities will include team games and swimming. It costs £20 per day per child and a parental consent form must be completed. At Halesowen Leisure Centre juniors can take advantage of the £7 for seven days offer to receive unlimited access between 9am and 5pm, including use of the swimming pools, squash courts and table tennis.

Both centres' swimming pools will be open throughout the school holiday.

For more information, or to book, call (01384) 812800, or visit www.dudley.gov.uk/sport

Breakfast workouts

A GYM is set to run a Breakfast Boot Camp due to fit in with people's busy lives

The Fitness Factory in Stourbridge have found that many struggle to get to regular classes due to work and family commitments but may have time free before going to work.

Half hour sessions will run from 6.25am on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday, starting February 6. The two-week trial is available for £20. Visit www.thefitnessfactory.info or call (01384) 444642.

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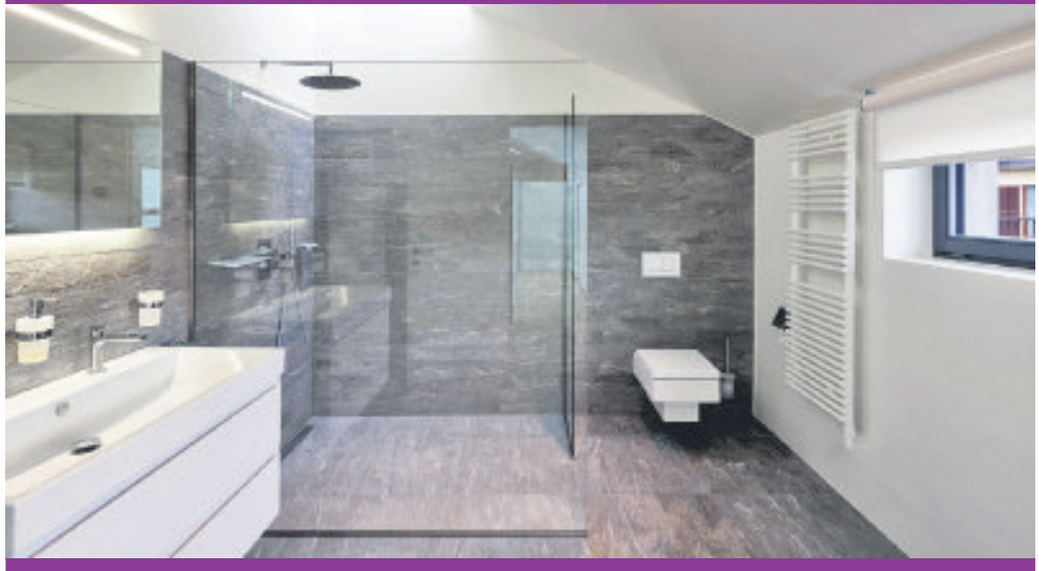

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GP service on the move to health centre

WORK is set to begin on allowing two GP practices in Netherton to operate from the same building.

Health bosses decided that there was not enough space to continue to serve more than 3,000 patients at Links Medical Practice on Halesowen Road, Netherton. As a result, it is now joining with Netherton Health Centre and its roll of 7,500 patients, based just 75 metres away on the same road.

Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) says that at the Netherton Health Centre site there is also enough space to build a £250,000 extension, which should be completed in June.

Dudley CCG is funding the relocation, and has assured patients that they will continue to see the same staff and disruption will be kept to a minimum.

Preview of next play

DUDLEY Little Theatre is giving a free open rehearsal of its next production.

It will be staging a play based on Emily Bronte's romantic classic Wuthering Heights at Netherton Arts Centre, March 8 to 11.

The cast will be appearing in Dudley Library in St James's Road on February 25, at 2pm when there will also be a Bronte Sisters-themed quiz. Free tickets are available in advance from the library.

FOCUS ON NETHERTON

Inspectors say that school requires 'special measures'

A SCHOOL in Netherton has been placed in special measures by education watchdog Ofsted with leaders criticised for 'failing to take action to stem the decline.'

By Clare Butler

The Hillcrest School and Community College was ranked inadequate in all five examined in the latest report, following an inspection of the secondary school on Simms Lane.

Dudley Council were also said to have an 'inaccurate' view of the school's effectiveness. The report states that standards of achievement at the school in Simms Lane have fallen, along with attendance.

It also claimed that leaders that underachieving pupils were incorrectly placed on the special educational needs register, resulting in 'special needs funding not being spent effectively'.

The report states: "This school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

"The persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

"The local authority has an inaccurate, overgenerous view of the school's effectiveness. It has been too slow to challenge leaders and governors about the school's declining performance, taking no action in response to the school's weak GCSE outcomes in 2015."

Hillcrest headteacher April Garratt said: "Although we are disappointed in their findings, we do accept there are areas where we need to improve. We are pleased the inspectors did recognise our 'energetic response' to last year's GCSE results.

"Staff and governors are committed to giving all pupils the best education we can to ensure they have the opportunity to go on and achieve great things as adults."

She added that pupils would 'significantly benefit' from Hillcrest also being made part of a new multi academy trust sponsored by Dudley College and also including Castle High School, Holly Hall Academy and High Arcal School.

Hillcrest School and Community College in Netherton will benefit from new mulit-academy trust partnership, says head

Geeky fun offered at half term

YOUNGSTERS can make electric paint robot cards at an event in Netherton library during half term.

The event takes place at the library between 2.30pm and 3.30pm on Wednesday, February 22.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for libraries, said: "There's a real appetite for coding and technology in the borough.

"I'm sure that this half term's Geek Week will go down really well with children and families wanting to find out more about technology."

Book a place by searching for 'Dudley libraries Geek Week' on eventbrite.co.uk where there are details of a programme of family events for February half term celebrating science, technology, comics, digital, animal handling and more. Youngsters are invited to join the fun and release their 'inner geek'.

Renew vows for Valentine

A CHURCH is planning a special romantic celebration.

St Andrew's Church, in Netherton, will be holding a free 'renew your vows' event in honour of St Valentine's Day.

All couples from any background are welcome to the event at the Highbridge Road church on Sunday at 3pm. There will also be free refreshments.

For further details contact Reverend Father Mike Rutter (01384) 237264.

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We're s-hopping mad over dumped trolleys

THESE shopping trolleys are clearly not where they belong.

Dozens of them have ended up blighting a nature reserve, posing a risk to wildlife, having been dumped.

But thanks to Alan Preece, the senior warden at the Saltwells Nature Reserve in Brierley Hill, and a hardy band of volunteers, they have been pulled out out brooks, hedges and ditches around the beauty spot.

Around 30 trolleys were rounded up during a clean-up operation.

They are thought to have been dumped by shoppers from the nearby Merry Hill shopping centre with many ending up clogging brooks and streams on the site.

Mr Preece said: "There was a lot more than usual over Christmas. We collect them up, put them in a central location and arrange for them to be collected."

"When you walk around a nature reserve you don't come to see shopping trolleys," Mr Preece said.

"If there is a build up in the brooks it could cause the water levels to rise and all the plants and burrows would be flooded. They form a grid and leaves stick to it, effectively forming a dam."

It is thought many of the trolleys are used to transport heavy goods and then discarded no longer needed. As well as being a nuisance for visitors to the beauty spot, the trolleys also pose a danger to the wildlife who call Saltwells their home.

Mr Preece added: "I am sure Merry Hill are doing what they can. People are stealing them from the shops and dumping them."

The clean-up was part of a wider project to improve the nature reserve.

Alan Preece, senior warden for Saltwells Nature Reserve, with the trolleys recovered at the beauty spot

1,000 driving tests delayed six months

MORE than 1,000 driving tests were cancelled due to examiner sickness, annual leave or bad weather in just six months, new figures reveal.

Examiners taking holidays meant some learners from the Black Country and Birmingham were forced to re-arrange tests after booking them. Dozens more tests have been called off due to examiners being off sick or for other medical reasons such as appointments.

Latest figures show a total of 1,100 HGV and car driving tests were postponed during the period at centres at Cannock, Featherstone, Birmingham Kingstanding, Lichfield, Lower Gornal, Stafford, Wednesbury and Wolverhampton between April 1 and September 30, 2016.

In total, 564 tests were postponed at Birmingham Kingstanding, which is often used by learner drivers from Sandwell, and 166 at Featherstone. At Wolverhampton 105 were called off while 101 were cancelled at Wednesbury and 73 at Lower Gornal.

During the six month period, 5,447 tests were conducted at Kingstanding, 4,634 at Wolverhampton, 4,462 at Lower Gornal.

Boss says the 'Trump effect' will help firms

WEST Midlands firms can reap 'huge benefits' from the boost to the world economy since Donald Trump's election, according to a business leader.

Ninder Johal, of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, said the 'Trump effect', which has seen an upturn in US financial markets, could lead to a period of growth for firms in the West Midlands.

It comes after the Bank of England said the UK had already seen a rise in business confidence since the US President took office.

By Peter Madeley

Mr Johal said: "I think there is a general belief that Britain may be moving from the back of the queue to the front of the queue under President Trump's administration.

"His comments suggest he is going to be a lot more accommodating to us than Obama was.

"The dollar has strengthened and we have seen an uplift in stock market confidence.

Positive

"If he pushes through his plans for infrastructure it can see good things ahead for the world economy.

"There are a lot of businesses in the Black Country and across the wider region that can see huge benefits as a result.

"There were a lot of positive messages for businesses coming out of Theresa May's recent visit to the White House.

"The question now is whether Mr Trump carries out his pledges and does not adopt an insular policy that is to the detriment of world trade."

Last week the Bank of England sharply increased its 2017 growth forecast for the second time in four months.

It expects the economy to grow two per cent this year, up from a November forecast of 1.4 per cent, itself an upgrade from the 0.8 per cent forecast made in August.

Since he took office Mr Trump has promised to cut taxes and boost US infrastructure spending.

The Bank's deputy governor for monetary policy, Ben Broadbent, said: "Financial markets have taken a relatively optimistic view so far. You've seen business confidence rise, particularly in the US, you've seen financial markets get more optimistic and I think that has had some impact on us."

Mr Broadbent added: "There are other things the US administration has said that people may worry more about. There's a lot we have yet to see about the detailed plans, so we'll have to wait and see."

Helping children read is a rewarding role

A CHARITY in the Black Country which helps to get children reading is looking to double the number of youngsters it supports.

Beanstalk currently has 100 volunteers who hold sessions with more than 300 school pupils but is on the lookout for extra help.

In the West Midlands, it's estimated that there are 8,000 pupils below the expected standards for reading and writing. As well as reading, volunteers play educational games and help children improve their conversational skills during one-to-one sessions at schools.

Michelle Searle of Beanstalk, said: "We have vacancies for helpers in Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton. Our volunteers feel such satisfaction when they see the children they support, grow and develop with their support."

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Borough recycling failing to hit target

RECYCLING rates in the Black Country are well below the target set by the Government for three years' time, with Dudley the worst.

Figures have been published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, showing the amount of waste reused or recycled in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton in 2015-16.

By Alex Ross

They reveal Dudley at the bottom of the list in the Black Country with just 38.5 per cent of household waste recycled.

In Dudley borough, households left 394 kg of waste for collection per person each year. But that's way off the Government target of half of all household waste recycling being recycled by 2020.

It is a worry for Dudley Councils, which could be punished with fines if the target is not met.

Message

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "Those who do recycle in the borough do so really well. But we need to get the message out and put incentives to get other people recycling.

"We have been handing out literature on this and there is a lot of information on our website, which I would encourage people to look at. Bit by bit we hope to reach the target."

In Wolverhampton where 39.5 per cent of waste is being recycled, marginally better than Dudley. In Sandwell 40.9 per cent of household waste collected was recycled and in Walsall 41.7 per cent..

The story was different in Staffordshire, where the county council recycled 50.3 per cent of all household waste collected.

Staffordshire County Council's cabinet member for communities and the environment, Councillor Gill Heath, was delighted that they have already met the Government target.

She said: "It is something we are very proud of. The more we recycle the less will end up in landfill."

Dudley the pup goes to guide dog school

Dudley, who will be trained as a guide dog, with Sue Philpott, left, and Councillor Margaret Aston

A PROSPECTIVE guide dog named Dudley is heading off to training camp, thanks to money raised by a former Mayor of Dudley.

Councillor Margaret Aston, the borough's first citizen in 2014-15, raised £32,000 through various events and donations from residents and businesse to her chosen charities during her year in office, Guide Dogs and Action Heart.

Guide Dogs have used their £16,000 donation to fund the training of three puppies, Dudley, Bentley and Arthur, all named by Councillor Aston.

All three puppies have spent the first year of their lives with puppy walkers, such as Sue Philpott, pictured with Councillor Aston.

The oldest of the three pups, Dudley, will be the first to go to the Guide Dog Training Centre in Leamington Spa to learn essential guide dog skills.

Councillor Aston said: "The Guide Dog charity is one which is extremely close to my heart. I have seen first-hand the positive impact a guide dog can have on the life of someone with sight loss or impairment."

She added: "Thank you to everyone who kindly donated throughout my Mayoral year."

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Black Country bid for first 'nature school'

ONE of the first nature schools in the UK could be created in the Black Country. Bosses from the Wildlife Trust have unveiled ambitious plans for the new school, which places an emphasis on outdoor learning.

The school, which will be in Smethwick, would be ran as an academy, and funded through the Government. It would be the among the first four in the country.

The school will be run by a head teacher and the exact location will be determined by to available sites and the local need for school places.

Georgia Stokes, chief executive of The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country said: "Rather than treating a visit to a natural space as a rare treat, we want to make nature the tool through which pupils learn every day. We're talking to Sandwell Council and asking for feedback from the local community."

If approved, the school aims to open in 2018.

Chef Alex Taylor from Gornal with the popular Trump pie, which rapidly sold out at The Pie Factory in Tipton

The Trump pie is helping make Tipton great again

A LANDMARK Black Country pub is mixing politics and pastry with its latest creation inspired by America's new President.

The Donald Trump Pie is proving a hit with the publicat Mad O'Rourke's Pie Factory in Tipton.

The £9.99 dish is filled with Mexican chilli and surrounded by a wall of nachos and topped with melted cheese.

It sold out within three days at the pub on Hurst Lane.

Inspired by landlord Pete Towler's visit to America, staff are now making a new batch to keep up with demand.

Head chef Dawn Pitts and assistant head chef Alex Taylor came up with the recipe, a cheeky nod at the President's dispute with Mexico.

Mr Taylor said: "The customers were all surprised with the satirical pie but it's been extremely popular and we sold out in three days.

"Once Pete messaged us to say he wanted to do a Trump pie we instantly thought of a Mexican chilli pie as we've done it before and with the whole Mexico wall controversy we thought it was quite fitting."

The pub also has plans for a Brexit pie in March when Britain will being the process of leaving the EU. The two chefs are keeping tight-lipped about the recipe.

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Appeal to remove toll to combat M5 delays

CALLS are being made for the M6 Toll to be made free to drivers during a major roadworks scheme, which will see the speed limit cut to 30mph on part of the M5.

Sandwell Council leader Steve Eling is calling for urgent action to ensure delays during the 18-month scheme on the M5, between West Bromwich and Oldbury, are kept to a minimum.

By Judith Hawkins

There are fears of gridlock misery in the Black Country as a result of the work on the motorway.

It was announced last week that the speed limit between Junction 1 and 2 of the M5 would be reduced to just 30mph as work is carried out on the Oldbury viaduct – which is crossed by 160,000 vehicles a day – from April.

Councillor Eling suggested removing charges from the toll road during the period to help ease congestion on the M5.

Misery

He said: "Highways England must recognise and deal with the massive impacts on our local roads this work create.

"Our concern is that the impact on the local network does not kill West Bromwich and Oldbury with 18 months of gridlock misery for local people.

"If our roads are gridlocked it would have serious consequences for the borough and could seriously affect our local economy and make our residents' lives a misery for 18 months."

Councillor Eling added: "We have made a number of suggestions to Highways England that we feel could help to reduce the effects on the stretch between Junction 1 and 2 and are hopeful that they take them on board."

"We are pressing Highway England to ensure that traffic flows through our stretch of the M5 are reduced by encouraging drivers who do not want to use Junction 1 and 2 to use the M42 and M6 routes.

"We have also made it plain though that the slip roads at Junction 1 and 2 should remain open for local traffic."

Highways England project manager Alastair Warnes said: "We have been working closely with key stakeholders, including local authorities and businesses, on this scheme.

"The work to repair the M5 Oldbury viaduct is vital and cannot be put off.

"We appreciate a busy stretch will be affected but we do everything possible to plan and manage our roadworks to keep traffic moving, minimise disruption and maximise safety. That includes ensuring that the slip roads between Junctions 1 and 2 will remain open for local traffic."

HomeServe pays £37m for stakes

MAINTENANCE group HomeServe has splashed out £37 million on snapping up stakes in Checkatrade and Habitissimo, marking its entrance into the home improvement market.

The Walsall-based group picked up a 40 per cent stake in Checkatrade, which is based in Selsey, with an option to increase its position by another 35 per cent in two years' time.

At the same time HomeServe has bagged a 70 per cent stake in Habitissimo, with an option to increase its position by a further 30 per cent in four or five years' time.

Richard Harpin, HomeServe's founder and chief executive, said: "Our investments in Checkatrade and Habitissimo underline HomeServe's ambition to be at the forefront of the technological revolution as the world's most trusted provider of home repairs and improvements."

Wonderful land for a great musical escape

REVIEW

Wonderland,
New Alexandra Theatre.
By Diane Davies

'I DON'T want to live in the real world!' Well we have all had days like that but poor Alice has had her car nicked, lost her job and her toe-rag ex is getting married again.

No wonder she decides to go chasing after a giant talking white rabbit with her daughter Ellie and some bloke from downstairs! They find themselves in Wonderland and Alice is convinced she doesn't want to return to the real world ever again.

The production, which recently debuted in Edinburgh, offers a contemporary take on the Lewis Carroll classic with the play starting at the foot of a tower block before plunging down the rabbit hole.

The magic dust is quickly sprinkled on in the second half however when the fairytale story starts to emerge.

Kerry Ellis as Alice and Stephen Webb as Jack in Wonderland

Colourful

Meanwhile the first half is saved by the colourful characters and an extremely strong cast.

From the funky caterpillar, played by Kayi Ushe, to the 'very important rabbit' played by stage veteran Dave Willetts, and the mesmerising performance from the scene-stealing young actress Naomi Morris as Ellie – the cast are captivating. This Frank Wildhorn musical, however, is largely about girl power. About two women who go through the Looking Glass to find their true selves – and return transformed in entirely different ways.

The Mad Hatter, played by Natalie McQueen, is egged on by Ellie to go through the Looking Glass to find her mettle and challenge the Queen of Hearts. Unfortunately the lunacy that follows is far more disturbing.

McQueen is hilarious as both the original Mad Hatter and the still bonkers but slightly tyrannical transformed character. She is physically comical and her delivery wonderful. She shines particularly in the second half with her edgy number I Will Prevail and in a powerful duet with Alice in This is Who I Am.

Likewise, it is in the second half that Kerry Ellis, as Alice, really excels. Ellis is a seasoned West End star with an award-winning performance as Elphaba in Wicked. She is utterly convincing as the downtrodden single mother Alice evoking some real empathy from the audience.

The love interest is Jack, the bloke downstairs, played by Stephen Webb who also brings some humour to the show.But top billing goes to Wendi Peters, alias Cilla Battersby-Brown in Coronation Street, who plays the Queen of Hearts. She is perfect for the role and boy can she hold a note, but it would be nice to see her on stage a little more.

The better numbers come in the second half and the singers' performances were excellent. This is an uplifting, fun show, so if you need to escape from the real world for a couple of hours – head to Wonderland. Runs at the New Alexandra Theatre until Saturday.

Rave on, and fans didn't need to be asked twice

All on stage for a rip-roaring show finale which had the audience on their feet at the Grand Theatre last week

The Buddy Holly Story,
Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton

RAVE on, he sang, and that is just what we all did at The Buddy Holly Story at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre. It may be 58 years ago that the legend died but this just proves that his music will live on forever.

In 18 short months the Texas-born boy revolutionized the face of contemporary music. This show tells of his meteoric rise to fame and his final performance at the Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake, Iowa, before his tragic and untimely death, at the age of 22, in a plane crash with fellow performers. The Buddy role was played by Glen Joseph, who alternates the role with Alex Fobbester, and although he looked a bit old to be the young Buddy his voice was spot on.

Rocking

Teamed with The Big Bopper (Thomas Mitchells) and Ritchie Valens (Jordan Cunningham) – the two who died with him in the plane crash on that freezing night – the stage was absolutely rocking.

In all the audience was treated to two hours of music with more than 20 of his greatest hits, including the classics That'll Be The Day, Peggy Sue, Oh Boy and Rave On.

The performance showed just how versatile the cast is. They can act, sing, dance and fit perfectly into the different roles they take on.

This production, seen by over 22 million music fans since it opened in London's West End in 1989, continues to thrill audiences of all ages. And from the way the Grand audience got on their feet for a standing ovation and to sing along at the end no doubt it will for many, many more years to come.

Sue Attwater

Singer Sheeran's concern over touts after Birmingham concerts sell out

ED Sheeran has urged thousands of disappointed fans not to paying extortionate prices for his upcoming concerts in Birmingham.

Tickets for the anticipated Barclaycard Arena gigs, on April 28 and 29, were released online and sold within 40 minutes, but surfaced quickly on resale sites on sale for up to £1,000.

Sheeran said he was 'deeply concerned' about online touts and urged his fans not to engage with them.

The singer-songwriter has teamed up with face value ticket platform Twickets for his April and May concerts, part of a headline arena tour.

But dozens of listings appeared on secondary ticketing sites offering the passes at inflated prices just minutes after going on sale.

Resale websites are touting tickets for Sheeran's tour for hundreds of pounds, with the original tickets costing just £77.80.

Sheeran two most recent singles, Shape Of You and Castle On The Hill hit numbers one and two in the charts.

Hugely popular chart-topping singer/songwriter Ed Sheeran, who will be performing in two concerts at the Barclaycard Arena in April

Don't ignore the warning signs.

If you've been suffering from tummy troubles such as **diarrhoea, bloating, discomfort or anything else that just doesn't feel right for three weeks or more,** it could be a sign of cancer.

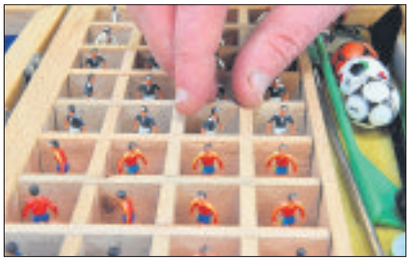
It's probably nothing serious, but finding cancer early makes it more treatable, so **tell your doctor.**

BE CLEAR ON CANCER

Search 'Be Clear on Cancer'

Still getting kick out of Subbuteo

The footballing tricks and flicks of old favourite can still draw a crowd, reports TOM OAKLEY



Box of tricks – keeping the tiny players safely packed away

TODAY'S top football stars earn hundreds and thousands of pounds a week for their silky tricks and flicks.

But flicking of a different kind rose to the fore when a Subbuteo table football competition was held in the Black Country.

You might have thought Subbuteo was a thing of the past after disappearing from the shelves decades ago. But everyone's favourite 'flick-to-kick' table top football game is making a dramatic comeback across the globe.

And in the Black Country, the Wolverhampton Subbuteo Football Club (WSFC) is launching itself, almost 20 years after the Black Country and Wolverhampton Table Football Club called full-time in 1999.

Recently 14 football flicking fanatics from as far as Sheffield met at the Pendeford Community Hub in Whitburn Close for the club's first tournament and the first such event in Wolverhampton for more than five years. The first memorial Roy Holden Subbuteo Tournament is aptly named in memory of the man who ran the original club until 1999. He died back in 2011.

Among those taking was 13-year-old Joseph Kinrade, from Sheffield, who represents England at the game. He travels across Europe to compete.

Justin Scott,43, from Pendeford, is the man behind the WSFC. He stopped playing in the late '90s but got back into the game after a nasty injury in the 'real game' meant he had to hang up his boots.

Stephen Davis, of Cannock, with Wolves fan Simon Davies

Total concentration from teenager Joseph Kinrade

Friend

He said: "I used to play in the mid 80s and got to a good standard as Midland Youth number two and won a National team event in Leicester. In July last year, I saw a picture on Facebook of an old friend playing Subbuteo and 'liked' the post.

"Less than two minutes later, he'd got in contact and asked me over for a game. We've been playing at people's houses since but things have grown quickly and we have formed the Wolverhampton Subbuteo Football Club."

The competition started off as a league before the best teams battled it out in the knockout stages.

At the end of the tournament, its first winner was Robert Ramsey, of Brierley Hill, and runners up were Mike Bradbury, from Willenhall, and Stephen Davies in third, from Hednesford.

Justin added: "Roy Holden was the organiser of the Black Country and Wolverhampton Table Football Club from 1965 to 1999.

"Roy was very passionate about Subbuteo and ran his club from a venue in Colliery Road in Eastfield which is where I began playing in the 80s.

"He was a very, very good player with a whole string of titles to his name. Roy was very well thought of in the Subbuteo community, so it seemed fitting to start off the new club by holding a tournament in his honour. I was very pleased that his daughters Samantha and Joanne were able to come along and present the trophies."

Up close – West Bromwich Albion fan Rob Ramsay from Quarry Bank

The club was at The Poynings in Regis Road, Tettenhall, from 7-9pm. It will meet up at that time and venue on a weekly basis.

Justin wants both experienced and new players to join from across the Black Country, regardless of ability, gender, age or skill. Full training will be provided to turn beginners into potential professionals.

He added: The great thing about Subbuteo is that you can get a set for under £30, which is cheaper than your average computer game nowadays. It is very collectible too, with virtually any team worldwide represented in the iconic plastic figures.

Anyone interested can go to Facebook @wolverhamptonsubbuteofootballclub or email wolverhamptonsfc@gmail.com

*All prices are subject to VAT

MOTORING

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO THE BEST CARS ON THE MARKET

NEW REG SPECIAL

COMMERCIAL SPOTLIGHT ON WHAT'S AVAILABLE FOR NEW REG INCLUDING:

MG GS

VAUXHALL

SUZUKI

Dudley Chronicle Thursday, February 9, 2017

Eager to please and great value

By Ian Donaldson

Pulling over to the kerb to ask directions (no map, no idea where we were) the helpful granny knew the way.

She also spotted the new MG GS we were sitting in on the first drive of the company's first fresh model for years.

And, she confidently told grandson, aged about eight, that yes, 'it was a new sort of MG.'

Well done gran. If an MG – long since built in China but designed in Birmingham still – is as easily recognised as this there might be a demand for more than the modest 1,000 the company hopes to sell here in a full year.

Two obvious factors will be instrumental in any sales success for the GS, latest entry in the SUV market where buyers clamour for something that looks tough and a bit off-roady but costs no more to run than a boring family hatch.

First possible sales clincher is the cost; with three versions of the GS priced at £14,995 (Explore), £17,495 (Excite) and £19,495 (Exclusive) with an automatic version of the latter at £20,995.

Each grade is several thousand pounds less than any obvious rival, named by MG as cars like the Honda CR-V, Kia Sportage and Nissan Qashqai. That's an excellent start, as long as the MG GS does not disappoint on things like quality and the way it drives.

It doesn't disappoint on value for money. Even the entry level Explore has cruise control, alloy wheels and air conditioning, while the Excite adds DAB radio, Bluetooth and rear parking sensors.

No satellite navigation though, which is why we were lost. For that you need the top grade Exclusive which also piles on leather upholstery with electric adjustment for the front seats, bigger wheels, xenon headlights and auto dimming interior mirror.

The GS is tidy all over and especially assertive at the back

Every MG GS is powered by the same 1.5 litre petrol engine, with 164bhp and enough for a 118mph top speed and 0-62mph in 9.6 seconds, and driving through the front wheels only.

There is no likelihood of a diesel (not offered on any GS, anywhere) but MG does sell a 2.0 litre petrol and a 4x4 version in other markets, so they would be available here if there was demand.

A brisk run on roads from rural to M40 produced a respectable 36.2mpg on the trip computer, not a figure likely to deter anyone who fancies a GS.

Another attraction to potential buyers might be the GS's five year/80,000 mile warranty. That will also apply to the next new MG, a smaller SUV due here in autumn next year but is not being applied to the current MG 3 or MG 6 models, which keep their three years/60,000 warranties.

All these details help make a case for the car but you can't imagine anyone buying an MG GS unless it looked the part – stylish is utterly vital in such a fashion-led part of the car market.

Well, to these eyes, MG has done a decent job on the looks front. Neat and tidy all over and especially assertive from the back, the GS will hold its head high in any supermarket car park or outside the kids' school at collection time.

Inside, everything stays neat and tidy but you can more easily see where the money has been saved to keep the cost so keen. Lots of hard plastics and switches and dials that look a generation older than those you'll find in the dearer opposition.

MG GS, FROM £14,995

MG has done a decent job on the looks front

But the GS fights back strongly when you get it out on the road, where it's quickly obvious the car was honed on British surfaces by engineers who know we like a responsive feel to our daily transport, but not at the cost of a bone hard ride.

Indeed, the MG GS feels eager to please in the way of an enthusiastic and smaller hatchback. It made me smile and actually enjoy the extra miles our lack of direction imposed before gran guided us to lunch.

● Summit Garage, Himley Road, Gornal Wood, Dudley. Call: 01384 259555

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Buy now at Black Country dealers

There's no better time to be visiting the Black Country Dealers to buy your new Vauxhall. They have some great offers on the boil, especially with the new Mokka X and the Corsa Limited Edition. And, you save on the new car tax increases due on April 1.

Stourbridge Motor House, T Wall, Halesowen Motor House and Dudley Motor Company, collectively known as the Black Country Dealers are part of a family-run business that has been trading in the West Midlands for over 65 years.

The group has invested heavily over the last two years, totally refurbishing their showrooms, service and waiting areas.

Andy Cooper, retail operator for the sites is extremely pleased with the improvements: "Having building work on the site isn't the best situation," he said. "But the staff are rising to the challenges. As the saying goes, 'no pain, no gain' and the showrooms all look fantastic, now the work is completed."

Vauxhall is happy too, as the investment ensures the company match the approved standards set by the manufacturer.

Now's the time to visit one of their showrooms, because as of April 1, all new vehicles sold will attract a £140 standard flat rate annual tax levy while cars that have a list price of over £40,000 will be charged even more. This is a change that will increase the tax bill on many new car models. The thinking is based on the carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions of the vehicle. But over say, a three-year period, you will be paying hundreds of pounds extra on your tax bill.

So, if a new car is on your shopping list for this year, then act now. By buying in February or March instead of April, you can save up to £380 on some of the most popular cars on the market.

There's a great deal on the Mokka X

Additionally, Black Country Dealers have a great offer on the Mokka X. With just a deposit of £99 you can be driving one of these fantastic compact SUVs for just £199 per month.

Or if one of Vauxhall's Corsas is more to your liking, then take a look at the £159 deposit, £159 per month offer that Black Country Dealers have, with a guaranteed part exchange of £1,000 for your current vehicle.

The full details of these offers and the terms and conditions that apply, as well as the range of savings across other models at their showroom are on their website: blackcountryvauxhall.co.uk or give them a call to talk through your options.

The retailer's extensive Vauxhall fleet of new and used vehicles, as well as an outstanding aftersales service ensures loyal customers keep coming back time and time again. The company has competitive service rates, to keep your Vauxhall vehicles running smoothly and efficiently. You can take out a service plan from as little as £12.99 a month.

You can get a Corsa for a £159 deposit, £159 monthly payments and a guaranteed £1,000 part exchange for your current vehicle

Customers can also benefit from an on hand, fully trained Vauxhall Motability team at each site, with years of expertise to confidently advise buyers in choosing a car that best suits their needs.

As the saying goes, 'he who hesitates is lost'. Hesitate until April to buy your new car at Black Country Dealers and that loss will be measured in pounds, shillings and pence!

- Stourbridge Motor House – 01384 447970
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The best new Vauxhall deals for March delivery

NU 17 REG

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Optional Final Payment	£4,608.00	Fixed Rate of Interest	£3.64% pa	Duration of Agreement	48 months	Total Amount Payable	£15,371.84
Excess Mileage Charge	£0.09	Based on an Annual Mileage of	5,000	Representative APR	4.7%	Amount of Credit	£10,971.00

Images and colours shown are for illustrative purposes only and may show optional equipment.
Option 1 - pay final payment and keep the car. Option 2 - Return the car. Option 3 - Trade in against a new vehicle. Offer is subject to availability and may not apply to all the retailer stocks. Finance provided by GMAC UK plc. P.O. Box 6666, Cardiff. CF15 7YT. Finance applicants must be 18 or over. Finance subject to status and terms and conditions. Available on orders made before 31st March 2017. Terms and conditions for £1,000 minimum part exchange: PX Ownership minimum 90 days, 3 months MOT. Less than 100,000 miles, not a CAT C or CAT D Total Loss Vehicle.

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VAUXHALL

Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO_2 emissions (g/km). Vauxhall range (excl. Ampera): Urban: 12.7 (22.3) - 76.3 (3.7), Extra-urban: 23.9 (11.8) - 94.2 (3.0), Combined: 18.0 (15.7) - 88.3 (3.2). CO_2 emissions: 373 - 85g/km.
Official EU-regulated test data are provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors. All offers subject to availability, terms and conditions. Pictures for illustration purposes only.

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Alto's a tight little bundle of character

By Matt Kimberley

Take the Alto platform, improve the rear suspension, give it much more space and lift the driving position and you'll end up with something a lot like the Celerio. But hold your horses because the new small Suzuki is worth a good deal more than the sum of its parts.

What's with the name, you ask? Well, we're told it hints at a celestial river of stars in the sky.

Obviously. Either way, the Celerio replaces both the Alto and the Splash.

It's just about wider than it is tall, but thanks to the new, more advanced rear suspension it's much more stable than it might be. The roof height allows a raised set of seats, and higher seats mean more legroom – and that's the key to the Celerio's image. It's a practical five-seat car, not a feather boa-wearing flouncer.

It's certainly not as pretty as the new Renault Twingo, for example, and it doesn't have the mature air of the Volkswagen Up, but its inoffensive styling hides a tight little bundle of character.

The boot is the biggest in the class; two litres bigger than the Hyundai i10's even though the Hyundai is 6cm longer overall. It's nice and evenly shaped, too; not too deep or at all hard to access.

Four adults will wonder what witchcraft is at work, but the fact is that four average-height men can slot into the Celerio with no problem. Three children can fit across the rear bench at a squeeze, but many of the little Suzuki's rivals can't seat five at all.

There are two engines; a standard 1.0-litre

It's just about wider than it is tall

that has no trouble hustling the mere 835kg car along if you keep it above 3,000rpm, or an upgraded unit with a whisker more torque that should be a little stronger at low revs. This SZ4-spec car is powered by the former.

The composure in the chassis is pretty impressive, but what's even more so is the ride quality, which for a sub-£9,000 car riding on 14-inch alloy wheels is brilliant – testament to Suzuki's insistence on testing prototypes on UK roads.

The interior, while it makes a good first impression, feels increasingly dated the longer you sit in it.

But it's by no means the worst in class and just check out the level of equipment you get as standard: Bluetooth, air conditioning, DAB radio, remote central locking, a trip computer and MPG meter, USB and 12-volt sockets… the list goes on.

Then check out the super-tight turning circle.

SUZUKI CELERIO SZ4, FROM £8,999

Four average-height men can slot in. Three children can fit in the rear, but many of the little Suzuki's rivals can't seat five at all.

You'll be laughing all the way to the high street when you park nimbly in gaps that other cars have to give up on.

Arguably, if you can stomach the manually-adjustable door mirrors and their unpainted housings, the £7,999 SZ3 model is the real bargain.

It shares most of the SZ4's mighty kit list for a £1,000 saving. That's also a huge chunk less than an equivalently-equipped competitor can cost.

Buyers are likely to be sensible types who know that what they need is more important than what they might want. City cars like the Fiat 500 and Smart ForFour have the Celerio beaten for style, but the Suzuki can hold its head high in the knowledge that it's just about the most spacious, most practical city car out there with a wedge of its own character to boot.

This car summed up in a single word: Overachiever.

If this car was a…: Hollywood film character it would be Rocky: always the underdog but more than capable of fighting its corner.

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Official Fuel Consumption Figures for the Suzuki Celerio range mpg (litres/100km) and CO_2 emissions (g/km): Urban 55.3-68.9 (5.3-4.1), Extra Urban 76.3-83.0 (3.7-3.4), Combined 65.7-78.4 (4.3-3.6), CO_2 emissions 99-84 g/km and for the Suzuki Swift range mpg (litres/100km) and CO_2 emissions (g/km): Urban 41.5-57.6 (6.8-4.9), Extra Urban 57.6-72.4 (4.9-3.9), Combined 50.4-65.7 (5.6-4.3), CO_2 emissions 128-99 g/km and for the Suzuki Vitara range mpg (litres/100km) and CO_2 emissions (g/km): Urban 42.1-61.4 (6.7-4.6), Extra Urban 55.4-76.3 (5.1-3.7), Combined 49.5-70.6 (5.7-4.0), CO_2 emissions 131-106 g/km and for the Suzuki Swift Sport range mpg (litres/100km) and CO_2 emissions (g/km): Urban 33.6-33.6 (8.4-8.4), Extra Urban 54.3-54.3 (5.2-5.2), Combined 44.1-44.1 (6.4-6.4), CO_2 emissions 147-147 g/km.

The above fuel consumption figures are based on an EU test for comparative purposes only and may not reflect real driving results. For full details contact your local participating Suzuki Dealer. Offer subject to availability for vehicles privately registered between 1st January to 31st March 2017 from participating Authorised Suzuki Dealers only. All prices and specifications correct at time of going to print. **SZ4 models only Model(s) shown *Celerio 1.0 SZ2 available at £6,999 on the road (Metallic paint available at £465). Celerio range – Celerio 1.0 SZ2 Petrol Manual available at £6,999 to Celerio 1.0 SZ4 Petrol AGS available at £10,199. *Swift 1.2 3dr SZ2 available at £9,249 on the road (Metallic paint available at £485). Swift range – Swift 1.2 SZ2 3dr Petrol Manual available at £9,249 to Swift 1.2 SZ4 5dr Petrol Dualjet available at £13,099. *Swift Sport 1.6 3dr available at £14,649 on the road. Swift Sport range – Swift Sport 1.6 3dr Petrol Manual available at £14,649 to Swift Sport 1.6 5dr Petrol Manual available at £15,149. *Vitara 1.6 SZ4 available at £14,999 on the road. (Single-tone metallic paint available at £500, dual-tone paint is available at £800.) Vitara SZ4 1.6 Petrol Manual available at £14,999 to Vitara SZ5 1.6 DDiS ALLGRIP TCSS with Rugged Pack available at £24,649.

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If you're planning to buy a new car this year, don't wait too long. Delay could cost you hundreds of pounds in extra tax!

This is something that the folks at the Brindley Garages Group are fully aware of and want to make sure you avoid. They know that come April 1, the rules regarding Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) or car tax as it's usually known, are changing, and to the detriment of most new car drivers.

According to the gov.uk website, "in the new system most motorists will be paying an annual VED payment of £140." Although zero-emission cars continue to remain free of tax, the government are replacing the current Standard Rate sliding scale so that nearly all drivers will have to find the money to pay this new annual £140 tax bill.

These changes mean that even buyers of Britain's most affordable cars will now find an increase in their car tax bill. Popular models such as the Vauxhall Astra and the Nissan Qashqai that at the moment have exemptions or very low duties will now pay more. And cars that have a list price of over £40,000 will attract additional charges. Now is the time to act!

Brindley Garages is one of the largest family owned car dealership groups in the West Midlands. They have dealerships in Cannock, Wolverhampton, Tipton and West Bromwich. They have a fantastic legacy of 85 years of superb customer service and high quality products – a heritage they are rightly proud of.

A whole host of offers are available

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So, you could soon be driving the all-new Kia Rio with its stylishly revamped, sculptured look and range of improved specifications. Or, the new Nissan Micra, now in its fifth incarnation and which is described by Nissan to be "designed and engineered to break away from convention," a great choice.

Or possibly, the Hyundai i10, the small 5-door city that is in the same segment as the Micra; sophisticated, stylish and yet deceptively simple in design, a wonderful motor to look over. And Honda have refined and restyled their long serving car of distinction the Civic to keep it very much a great choice for the modern motorist.

All of these and so many others are available at one of the Brindley Garage Group showrooms. They can advise you on the funding option that best suits you, such as personal contract purchase or a hire purchase plan, and tailor an individual package to suit your specific needs.

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Remember though, if you're in the market for a new car this year, buy your car now and the new rules won't apply. Make sure you're no April Fool this year and visit the nearest Brindley Garages showroom ASAP.

Visit the Brindley Garage Group website: www.brindley.co.uk for your nearest showroom and full contact details. Details of the vehicles they have on offer can be found there also.

Fiesta ST Line is refresh of the Zetec

By James Parker

Ford's Zetec S trim level has been replaced by the sporty-looking ST Line. We went to find out whether the car's appeal has increased as a result.

Less than you might think. This is the Fiesta we all know and love, and though the Ford dealer may tell you that ST-Line is an all-new trim level, the truth is that this is actually just a rebadged Zetec S.

Okay, that may be over-simplifying things a tad – the ST-Line's arrival has prompted a little bit of a refresh – but it isn't far off.

So what do you get for your (not inconsiderable) £15,795 outlay? Well, Ford will tell you that the deal-clincher is the ST-inspired bodykit, but you also get flashy alloys, lowered sports suspension and the Fiesta's excellent 1.0-litre EcoBoost petrol engine. Oh, and there's a handful of ST-Line badges thrown in, too

The current Fiesta may effectively be eight years old now, but it still looks as fresh as a daisy. The gaping grille, sharp lines and perfect proportions have seen it top the UK sales charts month in, month out, and it shows no signs of stopping.

This ST-Line version certainly isn't about to damage that record. The full-blown ST looks fantastic, and this less powerful version gets some well-judged trimmings inspired by that 180bhp flagship. The suspension, which drops the ride height by 10mm, gives it a squat and sporty stance that's supplemented by the boy-racer grille, skirts and spoiler, but it's never too over the top. It isn't brash or vulgar, just a really smartly styled machine.

If there is a sticking point, it will be the interior, which looks like someone fired a blunderbuss full of buttons at the dashboard. Everywhere you look there's a button, apart from the tiny little infotainment screen at the top, and the cabin plastics all look a bit old and out-moded. Of course, this isn't a flaw specific to the ST-Line car, but you would have hoped that Ford could have sorted it all out a few years ago.

The ST-Line trim mostly adds aesthetic tweaks, rather than practical ones, so the normal Fiesta's dimensions have been retained. That means you've got plenty of room in the front, but rear passengers will feel a tad cramped. It's fine for children back there, but the lack of headroom means adults probably wouldn't want to sit there for long. Further back, the boot's 290-litre volume puts it marginally ahead of its key rival, the VW Polo, but it still trails behind the likes of the Skoda Fabia and Honda Jazz.

One of the main reasons for the Fiesta's success has been the way it drives, and the ST-Line car is no different. The lowered sports suspension does make it slightly firmer than a bog-standard Fiesta, but it doesn't get really jiggly unless you're going fast on a rough road. More importantly, though, the lower ride makes the car more responsive in the corners and less prone to body roll thanks to the lower centre of gravity.

With the 123bhp version of the 1.0-litre EcoBoost engine providing the power, our test car also proved perky enough to raise a smile without being scarily rapid. Like the Zetec S before it, the ST-Line really is a pint-sized barrel of non-threatening fun.

FORD FIESTA ZETEC ST LINE, FROM £15,795

The current Fiesta may effectively be eight years old now, but it still looks as fresh as a daisy

ST-Line prices start from just under £15,800, and for that you get three doors and a 99bhp version of the 1.0-litre EcoBoost engine that's nippier than it sounds. Standard kit includes 17-inch alloys, a 4.2-inch infotainment screen and a heated windscreen, plus all the aforementioned ST-Line accoutrements.

A more tempting proposition may well be the 123bhp version of the little EcoBoost engine found in our test car. It's only a £500 option and it cuts the 0-62mph time from 11.2 seconds to 9.4. It transforms the car from a smart-looking runabout to a genuine warm hatch. There's a 138bhp EcoBoost, too, but that's £300 more expensive than the 123bhp engine and only shaves a few tenths of a second from the 0-62mph time.

All the EcoBoost engines are relatively economical, with even the most powerful managing 62.8mpg on the combined cycle, but if you want something even more parsimonious, you can always have the 1.5-litre diesel engine. With 94bhp on tap, it's the slowest engine of the four, but the 11.7-second sprint to 62mph is respectable and the 78.5mpg economy is very attractive. The biggest catch is the £1,100 premium it commands over the 99bhp EcoBoost.

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Dudley Chronicle Thursday, February 9, 2017

Versatile and comfortable Vauxhall

By Ian Donaldson

If cars weren't wide enough, there's a trend to make them look wider still with styling flourishes that fool the eye.

That's what's happened to Vauxhall's spacious seven-seat Zafira Tourer as it gets the mid-life revamp common to just about every car on the planet when its third or fourth birthday looms.

So the front of the Zafira gains new headlamps and a chrome bar, extending the apparent width of the car although, thankfully not actually making it harder to squeeze down an overparked suburban street.

Inside, the changes are more practical, starting with a new dashboard that moves the screen for the infotainment system from the top of the console to a new screen lower down. That improves the view forward and helps cut out some buttons too, as Vauxhall seeks to give the system the feel of a tablet (iPad, anyone?); Apple CarPlay and Android Auto let you link your mobile phone to the car.

Standard across the range is Vauxhall's OnStar service which does clever things from automatically calling the Luton-based service centre if the airbags go off – signifying a serious collision – where a real person (not a voice with press button options) will contact the emergency services for you, if needed.

OnStar operatives will also report details of a stolen car to the police, if requested, tell them where it is and prevent the vehicle from being restarted. All very serious and potentially helpful. But OnStar has other uses too – thousands of users have impressed their friends by honking the horn and flashing the lights by using the appropriate smartphone app when they're away from their car. You can check the tyre pressures while sitting in the pub, should you wish.

There are still three rows of seats

The latest Zafira Tourer starts from £18,655 and tops out at £29,630 with three engines to choose from, a 1.4 litre 140 horsepower petrol or a couple of diesels – 1.6 CDTI with 134 horses and the 170 horsepower 2.0 DCTi.

Best official economy comes with the smaller diesel, which posts a 62.8mpg average. That is also the slowest Zafira (120mph/10.4 seconds to 62mph) although neither figure is likely to worry a potential buyer. The 1.4 petrol manages 42.2mpg/124mph/9.9 seconds, with the 2.0 diesel posting 67.3mpg/129mph/9.1 seconds.

Company car users (and private buyers paying their own road tax) will find the tailpipe emissions of the new Zafira (1.4 litre 158g/km, 1.6 diesel 119g/km and 2.0 litre diesel 129g/km) pretty well what's expected.

Back inside the refreshed Zafira, you find the same three rows of seats as before, and just as practical. The rearmost fold down into the boot floor, and there are more practical cubbyholes than you'll find in an average Victorian townhouse and even a box under the front passenger seat. You can give two passenger in the second row a real limo feel by collapsing the centre seat into a big armrest and sliding the two outer ones inwards a little, adding to the sense of space that already sets the Zafira Tourer apart.

VAUXHALL ZAFIRA TOURER TECH LINE 2.0 CDTI, £23,370

The front of the Zafira gains new headlamps and a chrome bar, extending the apparent width of the car

Vauxhall wisely steers clear of trying to add a sporty overtone to the car, emphasising instead potential buyers as people who need a spacious and versatile vehicle for travelling long distances in high comfort. And they won't be disappointed. The ride is nicely controlled and biased gently towards comfort rather than Silverstone ability. A sensible choice.

Trying out the new Zafira with a version of Vauxhall's latest 'Whisper' diesel designed – you've guessed – to be quieter than what went before, only emphasised the car's long distance touring potential. The 2.0 DCTi engine quickly lost the typical diesel clatter from a cold start and produced the sort of low down pulling power that makes the gear lever almost an accessory out of town.

It would be no hardship to point the wider looking nose of the new Zafira towards a distant destination, knowing you'd arrive fresh and ready for more.

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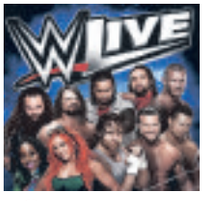

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Treat your Valentine to some stylish electronic R&B when London duo Catherine Pockson and Bob Matthews (AKA Alpines) bring songs from their second album Another River.
See **hareandhoundskingsheath.co.uk**

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Thu, £6 - £12
Birmingham Conservatoire,
Birmingham City University,
Edgbaston, B3 3HG.
Call 0121 331 5901

Green Bayou feat. Gary Whittingham & Smokin Ade Wakelin
Thu, £3
The RoadHouse Birmingham,
Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
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Tonight, £12 - £14
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WV14 7LJ.
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Cult Fiction + Iron 2 Maiden double header
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Dire Streets
Tomorrow, £15
Huntingdon Hall, Crowngate Shopping Centre, Worcester,
WR1 3LD.
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The Modfathers
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Colin Blunstone with his full band
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Rumours of Fleetwood Mac
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Four Year Strong
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POP

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New Alexandra Theatre,
Birmingham, B5 4DS.
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Dial M for Murder
Tonight - tomorrow,
Hall Green Little Theatre,
Birmingham, B27 7RY.
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The Red Shoes
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Birmingham Hippodrome,
B5 4TB.
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What's In A Name?
Tonight - tomorrow,
Birmingham Repertory Theatre,
Library of Birmingham, B1 2EP.
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Ursula
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Cinderella
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The RoadHouse Birmingham,
Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

ARTS & CULTURE

Spotlight Tour
Today, Sun, Free
Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace,
Birmingham, B1 2HS.
Call 0121 248 0708

Stitch Social
Today,
Creative Coffee Hub,
Birmingham, B29 6HJ.
Call 01215 727300

Theatre Tour
Tomorrow,
New Alexandra Theatre,
Birmingham, B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

Musical Portraits
Tomorrow,
Ruddock Performing Arts Centre,
King Edward's School,
Birmingham, B15 2UA.
Call 0121 472 9585

Beginners Machine Embroidery with Angie Hughes
Tomorrow,
Winterbourne House and Garden,
The University of Birmingham,
Edgbaston, B15 2TT.
Call 0121 414 4117

David Cox and his Contemporaries
Today - Thu,
Worcester City Art Gallery,
WR1 1DT.
Call 01905 25371

Darwin Memorial Lecture
Sun, £10
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

Whyley Dance
Tue,
Areley Kings Village Hall,
Areley Common, Astley Cross,
Stourport-on-Severn, DY13 0NB.
Call 07939 318973

Bite-sized talk: David Cox Influence and Influences
Tue,
Worcester City Art Gallery,
WR1 1DT.
Call 01905 25371

Solihull Photographic Society – Tessa Mills
Tue,
Solihull Women's Institute,
B91 3DQ,
Call 07815 165438

Somewhere Never Travelled – Annette Pugh Solo Exhibition
Today - Thu,
Reuben Colley Fine Art,
Birmingham, B3 2BB.
Call 0121 236 0920

Beginners Embroidery Course
Wed,
Creative Coffee Hub,
Birmingham, B29 6HJ.
Call 01215 727300

Photographic Prize 2017
Thu,
RBSA Gallery, Birmingham,
B3 1SA.
Call 0121 236 4353

FAMILY & KIDS

Parent and toddler morning
Tue, £2
Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace,
Birmingham, B1 2HS.
Call 0121 248 0708

MISC. EVENTS

Rugby Ramble
Tomorrow,
Birmingham Moseley Rugby Club,
Billesley Common,
B13 0PT.
Call 0121 443 3631

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Dancer Joanne takes the lead in 20s musical

A GOLD-DIGGING flapper gets more than she bargained for in the new revamped version of Thoroughly Modern Millie, a hit musical from the 60s that was set in the 20s and is coming to Birmingham.

This delirious comic celebration of the jazz age has star power with the professional winner of Strictly Come Dancing's glitterball, Joanne Clifton, making her leading role debut as the bobbed and bewildered Millie Dillmount, a Kansas girl adrift in New York City.

Searching for a rich husband amid the speakeasies and skyscrapers, Millie falls on hard times and finds herself in a low-rent hotel run by the villainous Mrs Meers, being played with relish by former EastEnder Michelle Collins.

Tap

The winner of six Tony Awards including Best Musical, Thoroughly Modern Millie is based on the 1967 Academy Award-winning film (which starred Julie Andrews) with new songs by Jeanine Tesori and Dick Scanlan. It was a Broadway smash when it opened in 2002, and was followed by a West End production starring Amanda Holden.

Highlights include explosive tap dance numbers and a 'Fred and Ginger' style routine on a window ledge.

The show runs at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from Monday to the following Saturday.

For tickets see www.atgtickets.com or call the box office on 0844 871 3011.

From Strictly to the roaring 20s, glitterball winner Joanne Clifton stars as Thoroughly Modern Millie in Birmingham

Growing up in the 1970s

CORONATION Street and Dinnerladies actress Shobna Gulati is starring in Anita and Me, a culture-clash comedy with its roots in Staffordshire village life.

The play was a huge success when staged at Birmingham Rep in 2015 and a new production by the Touring Consortium Theatre Company is staged at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre from Tuesday to the following Saturday.

Shobna Gulati (pictured left) will play Daljit in the new tour of the play adapted by Tanika Gupta from the book by Wolverhampton-born actress, author and comedienne Meera Syal.

The semi-autobiographical tale draws upon Meera's own childhood in Essington, and tells the story of Meena, the only girl from a Punjabi family growing up in a West Midlands mining village during the 1970s, and her friendship with Anita.

Meera Syal, a former Queen Mary's High School pupil who found fame on TV's Goodness Gracious Me, said: "I'm delighted that Anita and Me is touring the UK.

"It is amazing to think of so many people engaging in this story, particularly young people, who like me as a child, may be wondering how they fit in."

Admired

Oldham-born Shobna was delighted to land a role in Anita and Me. She said: "I've wanted to work on Meera's work for some time. Meera and I seem to have missed each other for one reason or another, but I've admired her work greatly over the years.

"I didn't read the book when it first came out, I don't know why. But it's a great role and it's one that I identify with strongly."

Tickets are on sale from the theatre box office, online at grandtheatre.co.uk or by calling 01902 429212.

She's Not There but Colin will be at the Robin

HIS voice features on one of the most spellbinding songs of the 1960s, She's Not There. Now the former lead singer of The Zombies, Colin Blunstone, is bringing is latest band to the Black Country.

The Zombies had another major hit four years later in 1968 with Time Of The Season and that year produced acclaimed album Odessey And Oracle. Blunstone had solo success in the 70s, including the hit Say You Don't Mind, and with Dave Stewart (What Becomes Of The Broken Hearted) and The Alan Parsons Project in the 80s. He's at The Robin 2, Bilston, on Wednesday. For ticket information see www.therobin.co.uk or call 01902 401211.

Dub rockers promise a Dread good night out

FOUNDED by Big Audio Dynamite drummer Greg Roberts and sound engineer/musician Tim Bran in 1993, Dreadzone went on to become stalwarts of the festival and post-rave dance music scenes with their fusion of dub reggae, electronic dance, folk and rock.

The John Peel favourites even made the UK top 20 singles in 1996 with Little Britain.

This month the band return to their dub roots on eighth album Dread Times, on their Dubwiser label, and will be in concert at The Slade Rooms in Wolverhampton on Saturday. Visit www.wolvescivic.co.uk or call 0870 320 7000.

Hard Rock Hell with 40 bands on the bill

FORGET flowers, how about some very heavy metal for Valentine's Day?

This weekend more than 40 hard rock bands will be gathering at the O2 Academy in Birmingham city centre for two days of metal mayhem.

The weekend festival under the HRH (Hard Rock Hell) Metal banner has been named the St Valentine's Day Metal Meltdown and is marking ten years of HRH.

Bands playing at the venue's three rooms include Skindred, Raging Speedhorn, Evile, Sodom, Lawnmower Deth, Senser, Obzidian, and Feed The Rhino. See www.hrhmetal.com for the full line-up details and ticket information.

Short Breaks & Holiday from only £79!

SHOWTIME With inclusive admission to top shows & acts in 2017!

The Lion King London Showtime 2 DAYS

Sat 11 March	£149
Sat 30 September	£149

What's included?
- Coach travel with reserved seating
- One night bed & breakfast at our select hotel
- Free time to enjoy the attractions of London
- Inclusive admission to the matinee performance of The Lion King at the Lyceum Theatre, London. Age 3+

2 DAY SHOWTIME BREAKS

Sat 4 Mar	Dreamboats and Petticoats - Live in Manchester	£99
Sat 4 Mar	London & Star Wars Identities at the O2	£99
Sat 4 Mar	Sunny Afternoon & Historic York	£119
Sat 11 Mar	Beautiful - The Carole King Musical - London (B&B)	£139
Sat 11 Mar	Funny Girl - Live in Liverpool	£119
Thu 16 Mar	Frankly Sinatra Live In Concert (B&B)	£99
Thu 16 Mar	Olly Murs - Live in Liverpool	£139
Fri 17 Mar	The Magic of Motown & Liverpool	£99
Sat 18 Mar	The Full Monty & Historic York	£99
Mon 20 Mar	Llandudno Grand & Anton and Erin	£209
Sat 25 Mar	Grease - Live in Manchester	£119
Sat 25 Mar	Justin's Party & Blackpool Fun Time	£99
Sat 1 Apr	Bay City Rollers - Les Mckeown Live	£99
Wed 5 Apr	The Who Live in Manchester	£159

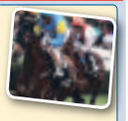
NATIONAL SPORTS Sensational Sports Breaks....

2/3 DAY SPORT BREAKS

Sat 8 Apr	2	The Grand National - Steeple Chase Enclosure & Liverpool	£119
Thu 13 Apr	2	Betway Premier League Darts - Live!	£99
Sat 15 Apr	2	Liverpool & Haydock Races - Easter Special	£99
Sat 13 May	2	Liverpool & Haydock Races	£99
Sat 13 May	2	Women's FA Cup Final - Wembley (B&B)	£99
Sat 20 May	2	British Touring Car Championship - Oulton Park	£119
Sat 20 May	2	FA Vase & FA Trophy Finals - Wembley (B&B)	£99
Sat 27 May	2	Truckfest Spectacular & Oxford	£99
Sat 5 Aug	2	England v South Africa - Old Trafford	£129
Sat 12 Aug	2	Liverpool & Haydock Races	£99
Sat 26 Aug	2	Ebor Stakes - York Racecourse	£119
Sat 2 Sep	2	Burghley Horse Trials	£99
Fri 8 Sep	3	London & The Goodwood Revival	£199
Sat 30 Sep	2	The Offical World's Strongest Man Tour Finals (B&B)	£119

Liverpool & Chester Races 2 DAYS

Sat 27 May	£99	Sat 5 August	£99
Sat 1 July	£99		



What's included?
- Coach travel with reserved seating
- One night dinner, bed & breakfast at our select hotel
- Visit to Liverpool
- Inclusive admission to Chester Races.

Explore Europe Explore the best of Europe.....

Rome & Taste of Italy 7 DAYS

Sun 5 March	£319	Sun 2 April	£349
Sun 19 March	£319	Sun 23 April	£349

What's included?
- Coach travel with reserved seating
- Four nights dinner, bed & continental breakfast plus two evening meals in Montecatini Terme
- Overnight stops on outward & return journeys on bed and continental breakfast basis
- Guided tours of Vipitino & Innsbruck
- Full day excursion to Florence
- An extended day to Rome
- Excursion to Pisa

4/5/7 DAY EUROPEAN BREAKS

Fri 24 Feb	4	Disneyland Paris at the Magic Circus (B&B)	£349
Fri 24 Feb	4	Disneyland Spectacular at The B&B Hotel (B&B)	£279
Fri 24 Feb	4	Disneyland Spectacular at The Kyriad (B&B)	£279
Fri 24 Feb	4	Ostend Weekend Superdeal	£129
Fri 24 Feb	4	Paris Weekend Superdeal (B&B)	£149
Mon 27 Feb	5	Rhine & Moselle All Inclusive	£199
Mon 27 Feb	5	Rhine Valley Superdeal	£169
Sun 5 Mar	7	Lake Garda & Venice All-Inclusive	£339
Mon 6 Mar	5	Ostend All Inclusive	£239
Mon 6 Mar	4	Ostend Special Breakaway	£139
Mon 6 Mar	5	Ostend Superdeal	£209
Mon 6 Mar	5	Rhine & Moselle All Inclusive	£219
Mon 6 Mar	5	Rhine Valley Superdeal	£189
Mon 6 Mar	5	Three Countries Inclusive Special	£199

Special Events Enjoy admission to sensational Special Events.

2 DAY SPECIAL EVENTS BREAKS

Sat 1 Apr	Victoria at Harewood House	£89
Mon 3 Apr	Flying Scotsman Special	£119
Sat 15 Apr	Emmerdale The Tour	£99
Sat 15 Apr	London & The Tall Ships Regatta Easter Special	£119
Sat 22 Apr	Cotswolds Wartime 1940's Special	£89
Sat 22 Apr	Skipton Market & Harrogate Flower Show	£99
Tue 25 Apr	Gino's Italian Escape - Live!	£99
Sat 6 May	The London Motor Show (B&B)	£99
Sat 13 May	Abingdon Airshow & Historic Bath	£99
Sat 13 May	Hobbycrafts, Stitch & Sew - Live!	£79
Sat 20 May	Emmerdale The Tour	£99
Sat 27 May	Chelsea Flower Show (B&B)	£169
Sat 10 Jun	Ideal Home Show & Liverpool	£79
Sat 24 Jun	Victoria at Harewood House	£89

Emmerdale Studio Experience 2 DAYS

Sat 18 March	£99	Wed 17 May	£79
Sat 22 April	£99	Wed 21 June	£79

What's included?
- Coach travel with reserved seating throughout
- One night dinner, bed & breakfast at our select hotel
- All bedrooms with en-suite facilities
- Saturday visit to Skipton for its colourful market.
- Included guided tour at the Emmerdale Studio Experience and enjoy the much loved surroundings of the Dingles, Bernice's Salon, Smith Cottage and The Woolpack

Family Fun Great breaks for all the family!

Polar Bears, Penguins & Kingdom of Ice 2 DAYS

Sat 15 April	£99	Sat 17 June	£99
Sat 20 May	£99	Sat 29 July	£99

What's included?
- Coach travel with reserved seating throughout
- One night dinner, bed & breakfast at our select hotel
- Included admission to the Yorkshire Wildlife Park to visit the Polar Bears and numerous other animals
- Included admission to the stunning 'Deep' in Hull where visitors can enjoy a unique interactive experience.

2 DAY FAMILY FUN BREAKS

Sat 18 Mar	Legoland Spectacular (B&B)	£99
Sat 25 Mar	London & Harry Potter Studio Tour	£119
Sat 1 Apr	Islands at Chester Zoo & Llangollen Cruise	£99
Thu 6 Apr	London & Harry Potter Studio Tour	£119
Thu 13 Apr	London & Harry Potter Studio Tour	£119
Sat 15 Apr	Legoland Spectacular (B&B)	£119
Sat 15 Apr	London & Harry Potter Studio Tour	£119
Sat 22 Apr	Longleat Safari Park, Jungle Cruise & Windsor	£99
Sat 29 Apr	Islands at Chester Zoo & Llangollen Cruise	£99
Sat 29 Apr	Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funtime	£89
Sat 20 May	London & Harry Potter Studio Tour	£119
Sat 27 May	Longleat Safari Park, Jungle Cruise & Windsor	£99
Sat 3 Jun	Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funtime	£89
Sat 10 Jun	Islands at Chester Zoo & Llangollen Cruise	£99

To book go to nationalholidays.com or call 0844 571 4867 formerly Travelstyle

PLUS!!! MANY MORE breaks available...

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

CHOICE

Terry Pratchett

Terry Pratchett: Back in Black (BBC2, 9pm)
A dramatised documentary telling the story of the life of Terry Pratchett, the fantasy author whose popular Discworld series made him a household name, selling more then 85 million copies worldwide. In 2015, following a prolonged and very public battle with Alzheimers, Terry died, leaving behind one last unfinished story - his own. Here, actor Paul Kaye steps into the celebrated writer's shoes, charting Terry's life from his troubled schooldays and his difficulties securing the respect of literary critics, through to his eventual success, and his gradual decline into ill health. The film makes use of Terry's own words, along with those of his friend and collaborator Neil Gaiman.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** The Best Dishes Ever. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Nitro Athletics: Usain Bolt Takes on the World. **2.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.30 Film:** Shrek 2. (2004) Animated adventure sequel. **3.55** BBC News. **4.05** Regional Programme. **4.15** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Wales v England (Kick-off 4.50pm).

6.55 Let It Shine. Graham Norton and Mel Giedroyc take the nationwide talent search live, as the five assembled boy-bands discover for the first time what the viewing public really think of them. Having battled through solo auditions and collaborations with some of Britain's biggest musical stars, the would-be pop princes must now stand on their own two feet, performing as five-pieces for the first time. There's a change to the judging panel too, as Dannii Minogue, Martin Kemp and Gary Barlow are joined by a special guest judge to cast their verdict on each band's performance. At the end of the show, lines are opened for viewers at home to vote for their favourite act.

7.55 Casualty. Connie is on the warpath as the day of Elle's hearing arrives. However, when Grace is severely injured, her life ends up in Elle's hands.

8.45 Let It Shine – The Results. The results of the viewer vote are revealed, and the three top-scoring bands claim a place in the next stage of the contest, while the remaining two battle for survival.

9.15 Taboo. Delaney's trading plans begin to unravel, and a shocking family revelation have an impact on not only James himself, but also his erstwhile allies, his household, and his family.

10.15 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.

10.30 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Liverpool v Tottenham Hotspur at Anfield.

11.55 This Country. New series. Mockumentary presenting a wry look at the lives of young people living in modern, rural Britain, via two ne'er-do-well cousins living in the Cotswolds.

12.20 Film: Passion. (2012) **2.00** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.05** BBC News.

BBC2

6.30 Film: Magic Town. (1947) **8.10 Film:** The Lavender Hill Mob. (1951) **9.30** Coast. (R) **10.00** Britain's Secret Seas. (R) **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** A Cook Abroad: Tony Singh's India. (R) **1.00 Film:** Quo Vadis. (1951) Historical epic, starring Robert Taylor. **3.45** Flog It! (R) **4.30** Final Score. **5.30** Mastermind. (R)

6.00 University Challenge. Student quiz, chaired by Jeremy Paxman. (R)

6.30 Only Connect. Victoria Coren Mitchell presents the quiz show in which successful contestants make connections between things that initially do not appear to be linked. (R)

7.00 Welcome to Hull: City of Culture 2017. Comedienne Lucy Beaumont returns to Hull to preview some of the cultural highlights taking place throughout 2017, with help from actress Maureen Lipman and writer Richard Bean.

7.30 George III – The Genius of the Mad King. After 200 years under lock and key, all the personal papers of George III are seeing the light of day for the first time. In this documentary, Robert Hardman uses these documents to shed new light on Britain's longest-reigning king, revealing a man who was a political micromanager and a restless patron of science and the arts, and someone who was driven – sometimes to distraction – by his sense of duty to his family and his country. Featuring readings by Simon Callow and Sian Thomas. (R)

8.30 Dad's Army. The platoon competes against a rival unit for the honour of guarding Winston Churchill on a visit to Walmington-on-Sea. Guest starring Barbara Windsor. (R)

9.00 Terry Pratchett: Back in Black. Paul Kaye steps into Terry Pratchett's shoes in a dramatised documentary that makes use of the celebrated fantasy author's own unpublished writing to tell his own life story.

9.50 QI XL.

10.35 Film: Behind the Candelabra. (2013) Biopic of pianist Liberace. Directed by Steven Soderbergh and starring Michael Douglas.

12.30 Film: A Royal Affair. (2012) **2.40** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.30** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Teen Titans Go! (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Bear Grylls Survival School. **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** Alphabetical. (R) **10.25** Guess This House. (R) **11.25** River Monsters. (R) **11.55** ITV News; Weather. **12.00** Dance Dance Dance. (R) **1.30** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Italy v Ireland (Kick-off 2.25pm). **4.30** Tipping Point. (R) **5.30** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.45** ITV News; Weather.

6.00 You've Been Framed! To the Max! Harry Hill showcases a selection of high-octane comical mishaps, captured on video by viewers.

7.00 Ninja Warrior UK. Ben Shephard, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara host the penultimate edition of the obstacle-course contest, as competitors from across the UK test their strength, speed and courage.

8.00 The Voice UK. Celebrity "coaches" Will.i.am, Tom Jones, Jennifer Hudson and Gavin Rossdale preside over the penultimate round of Blind Auditions. As ever, the celebrity panel must decide whether to lend their support to each act with their backs turned to the performer, allowing only the contestants' voice to play a part in the selection process. If more than one coach wants to claim the same artist, then the contestant is given a chance to choose which coach they would like to join.

9.20 Through the Keyhole. Fay Ripley, Steve Jones and Rochelle Humes form the studio panel, as Keith Lemon challenges them to guess which celebrity homes he has invaded this week.

10.20 ITV News; Weather.

10.35 Film: The Bourne Ultimatum. (2007) The amnesiac assassin regains his memory, just as a CIA director sets in motion a plan to kill him. Spy thriller sequel, starring Matt Damon, Julia Stiles and David Strathairn.

12.40 Jackpot247. **3.00** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.20 The King of Queens. (R) **6.45** The King of Queens. (R) **7.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **9.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.20** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.50** The Simpsons. (R) **11.20** The Simpsons. (R) **11.55** Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. (R) **12.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.30** Come Dine with Me. (R) **3.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) **4.35** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.35** Grand Designs. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Penelope Keith's Hidden Villages. The Welsh peninsula of Pembrokeshire provides the setting for Penelope's last outing, as she tours villages clinging to the cliffsides and estuaries, or nestled beside beaches, farms and castles. She discovers how Manorbier has connections to both Virginia Woolf and CS Lewis's Narnia stories, and pays a visit to the waterside villages of the Cleddau Estuary, from Llangwm to Lawrenny. She encounters native Welsh-speakers in the Preseli Hills, and visits St Dogmaels, home of an impressive food market. Last in the series. (R)

8.00 Great Canal Journeys. Timothy West and Prunella Scales take a trip to Bristol, where Timothy is soon to play King Lear at the Old Vic, and revisit both their childhood homes in Devon. (R)

9.00 Film: 2 Guns. (2013) Two undercover agents – one working for the DEA the other for the Navy – infiltrate a drug cartel, only for the planned sting operation to go disastrously wrong. Both operatives become fugitives and must work together to survive – but both keep their true identity a secret, mistakenly thinking the other is a real criminal. Action adventure, starring Denzel Washington and Mark Wahlberg.

11.10 Film: Riddick. (2013) A fugitive left for dead on a dangerous alien world lures bounty hunters to the planet in a plot to escape. Sci-fi thriller sequel, starring Vin Diesel.

1.15 The Last Leg. (R) **2.10** Hollyoaks. **4.15** Building the Dream. **5.05** Jamie's Comfort Food. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.25** Access. (R) **10.30** Police Interceptors Unleashed. (R) **11.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.00** Benefits: Can't Work, Won't Work. (R) **2.00** Benefits: 19 Kids and Counting the Cost. (R) **3.00** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **4.00** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **5.00** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R)

6.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Repossession agents Mike Allonby and Terry Jones travel to Cheshire to collect a vehicle from a woman who owes several hundred pounds on a loan, then they head to Liverpool to recover a Jaguar X-Type. High court enforcement officers Paul Bohill and Steve Pinner carry out an order to evict a couple with young children in London's East End just a few days before Christmas, and later, in Essex, try to track down a man who owes more than £10,000 to his landlord. (R)

7.00 NCIS: Los Angeles. Deeks places his job in danger when he shoots and kills an unarmed man, prompting unexpected emotions for Kensi as she contemplates losing her partner.

8.00 NCIS. A petty officer is shot dead in a manner matching the modus operandi of the Tri-State Sniper, but said killer is discovered to have been in custody on the day of the shooting.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Brighton & Hove Albion v Burton Albion at the AMEX Stadium.

10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce all the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including AFC Wimbledon v Charlton Athletic at Cherry Red Records Stadium.

10.30 World's Biggest Diamond Heist. The experts try to repeat the breathtaking theft of around £91million-worth of diamonds from a maximum-security underground vault in 2003.

11.30 Police Interceptors Unleashed. (R) **12.00** SuperCasino. **3.10 Film:** Against All Flags. (1952) **4.40** Access. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Natural World: Meet the Monkeys **8.00** A303: Highway to the Sun **9.00** Treasures of Ancient Egypt **10.00** The Young Montalbano **11.45** Top of the Pops: 1983 **12.50** The Joy of Disco **1.50** Boogie Fever: A TOTP2 Disco Special **3.20** Sounds of the 70s **3.50** Close

ITV2
11.15 Ninja Warrior UK **12.15** Take Me Out **1.35** You've Been Framed! Gold **2.10 Film:** Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007) **3.10** FYI Daily **3.15 Film:** Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007) **4.00 Film:** Snow Dogs (2002) **5.00** FYI Daily **5.05 Film:** Snow Dogs (2002) **6.05 Film:** Evan Almighty (2007) **7.05** FYI Daily **7.10 Film:** Evan Almighty (2007) **8.00** Scorpion **9.00 Film:** Shaun of the Dead (2004) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05 Film:** Shaun of the Dead (2004) **11.05** Family Guy **12.35** American Dad! **1.30** Release the Hounds: Famous & Freaked **2.25** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
11.40 Film: Rest in Peace, Mrs Columbo (1990) **1.45** Agatha Christie's Marple **3.55** Lewis **5.55** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Doc Martin **9.00** Midsomer Murders **11.00** Lewis **1.00** Blue Murder **1.55** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
11.05 The Professionals **12.05** Storage Wars: Texas **1.05** Storage Wars **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Newbury. Ed Chamberlin presents coverage of six races from Newbury and Warwick. **4.00 Film:** Every Which Way But Loose (1978) **5.05** FYI Daily **5.10 Film:** Every Which Way But Loose (1978) **6.10** Storage Wars **6.45** Live Snooker: World Grand Prix. **11.15 Film:** Mars Attacks! (1996) **12.15** FYI Daily **12.20 Film:** Mars Attacks! (1996) **1.25** The Wine Show **2.30** Sporting Funnies **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
2.30 The Goldbergs **5.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Bridesmaids (2011) **11.30** Gogglebox **1.40** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **2.35** The Inbetweeners **3.30** Virtually Famous – Tattoo Fixers vs Virtually Famous **4.10** Rude(ish) Tube

Film4
11.00 Genevieve (1953) **1.00** Inkheart (2008) **3.05** ParaNorman (2012) **4.55** Turner & Hooch (1989) **6.55** Volcano (1997) **9.00** Super 8 (2011) **11.15** The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2 (1986) **1.20** Machete Kills (2013) **3.35** Close

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CHOICE

Stephen Fry

British Academy Film Awards 2017 (BBC1, 9pm)
Stephen Fry hosts the awards ceremony live from the Royal Albert Hall. This year's nominated films include I, Daniel Blake, La La Land, Arrival, Nocturnal Animals and Manchester by the Sea, while Meryl Streep, Amy Adams, Dev Patel, Natalie Portman, Jake Gyllenhaal, Emma Stone, Ryan Gosling, Jeff Bridges, Naomie Harris and Michelle Williams are among the actors in the running for awards.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.30** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Spy in the Wild. (R) **2.15** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. France v Scotland (Kick-off 3.00pm). **5.00** Songs of Praise. **5.35** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme.

6.00 The Big Painting Challenge. New series. The nationwide search for Britain's best amateur artist returns, with Mariella Frostrup and the Rev Richard Coles taking over hosting duties. In the first edition, 10 contestants put their still life skills to the test, with some words of advice from Diana Ali and Pascal Anton. The artists must first paint a table laden with objects, before being split into two groups and challenged to produce a homage to either Van Gogh or Lichtenstein. Judges Lachlan Goudie, Daphne Todd and David Dibosa assess their efforts and decide who should be eliminated from the contest.

7.00 Countryfile. Reports on the latest rural developments. Including weather for the week ahead.

8.00 Call the Midwife. A woman expecting her third child realises she cannot afford to care for her baby, so makes the painful decision to give it away to her wealthy but childless cousin. Shelagh befriends the woman in the next hospital bed while recovering from her miscarriage, and Dr Turner confides in Timothy about his worst fears. Sister Julienne looks for a new recruit to join the midwives, and the community prepares to celebrate the opening of a new park.

9.00 British Academy Film Awards 2017. Stephen Fry hosts the awards ceremony live from the Royal Albert Hall. This year's nominated films include I, Daniel Blake, La La Land, Arrival and Manchester by the Sea.

11.00 BBC News.

11.20 Regional Programme.

11.30 American High School. New series. Cameras follow staff and pupils at a majority African-American High School in South Carolina. A new principal tries to improve grades and discipline.

12.10 The Celebrity Apprentice USA. **1.35** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.40** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **6.45** Big Dreams Small Spaces. (R) **7.45** An Island Parish: Anguilla. (R) **8.15** The Edible Garden. (R) **8.45** Countryfile. (R) **9.45** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.15** Nigel Slater's Dish of the Day. (R) **11.45** Nigellissima. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Nitro Athletics: Usain Bolt Takes on the World. **2.00 Film:** The Winslow Boy. (1999) Edwardian drama, starring Nigel Hawthorne. **3.40** Money for Nothing. (R) **4.10** Flog It! (R) **5.00** Ski Sunday. **5.45 Film:** Catch Me If You Can. (2002) Fact-based drama, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hanks.

8.00 Dragons' Den. Panellists Deborah Meaden, Peter Jones, Touker Suleyman, Sarah Willingham and Nick Jenkins assess the profit-making potential of a brand of wheatgrass tablets, customised earphones, a teacher's online male grooming enterprise, and a range of baby products created by an Irish couple. Presented by Evan Davis.

9.00 Special Forces – Ultimate Hell Week. The remaining contestants undergo 48 hours of training by a former master sergeant of the US Army's Green Berets. The unit's motto is Leave No Man Behind, and the gruelling challenges they face force the recruits to live up to this code by punishing everyone for the failure of any individual member of the group.

10.00 Match of the Day 2. Jason Mohammad reviews the day's Premier League action, which featured Burnley v Chelsea at Turf Moor, and Swansea City v Leicester City at Liberty Stadium.

11.00 Live at the Apollo. Gina Yashere introduces surreal Australian comedian Sam Simmons and rising comedy star Ellie Taylor to the stage of London's Hammersmith Apollo. (R)

11.45 Six Nations Rugby Union. Highlights from this year's tournament.

12.15 Film: All Good Things. (2010) The heir of a wealthy family marries a medical student, but is suspected of murdering her when she disappears without trace. Crime drama, starring Ryan Gosling and Kirsten Dunst. **1.50** Sign Zone: Question Time. Topical debate from Torquay, chaired by David Dimbleby. (R) **2.50** Holby City. A familiar face makes a return under shocking circumstances. (R) **3.50** This Is BBC Two. Preview of upcoming programmes from BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! **6.20** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Scooby. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled! **7.35** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors. **8.20** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.45** Teen Titans Go! (R) **9.05** Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Countrywise: Guide to Britain. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** Gino's Italian Escape: Hidden Italy. (R) **11.30** Chopping Block. (R) **12.30** ITV News; Weather. **12.40 Film:** Murder on the Orient Express. (1974) Agatha Christie mystery, starring Albert Finney. **3.05** All Star Family Fortunes. (R) **3.50** Ninja Warrior UK. (R) **4.50** The Voice UK. (R)

6.00 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.10 ITV News; Weather.

6.30 Dance Dance Dance. Alesha Dixon and Will Best host the final of the celebrity dance contest. Just two contestants and their dance partners remain in the running, and they will have to undergo a gruelling rehearsal process before trying to impress judges Ashley Banjo, Tina Landon and Timor Steffens with re-enactments of famous performances by Beyonce, Lady Gaga and Gene Kelly. Last in the series.

8.00 Lion Country: Night and Day. The two prides find their territories overlapping. A lioness gives birth to a litter of cubs, and a lost elephant searching for its family strays into the middle of the conflict.

9.00 The Good Karma Hospital. A mysterious man is found washed up on the beach. Ruby gets to grips with her new routine at the hospital, but begins to question Gabriel's professional conduct.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.20 Six Nations Highlights. Mark Pougatch presents action from the three matches in the second round of this year's championship, featuring Wales v England, Italy v Ireland and France v Scotland.

11.15 Premiership Rugby Union. Mark Durden-Smith and David Flatman present action from the latest top-flight fixtures, including Exeter Chiefs v Wasps, Bath v Northampton Saints and Worcester Warriors v Saracens.

12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** Chopping Block. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) **2.35** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) **3.40** Location, Location, Location. (R) **4.45** Channel 4 News. **5.15 Film:** Mrs Doubtfire. (1993) A divorced actor disguises himself as an ageing female Scottish housekeeper to get a job looking after his own children. Comedy, with Robin Williams, Sally Field and Pierce Brosnan. Edited for language.

7.30 The Jump. The contestants' second challenge is to compete in snowcross, an event that requires them to race downhill on snow skates across a winding course littered with turns, jumps and obstacles. The losers must then face The Jump to determine which of them will be eliminated from the contest. Presented by Davina McCall.

9.00 Homeland. While Carrie handles her client, Saul's trip takes a dramatic turn, and Quinn investigates. Claire Danes and Rupert Friend star.

10.05 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Jimmy Carr hosts the comedy panel show's version of the words-and-numbers quiz, as Jon Richardson and David Mitchell take on guest captain Joe Wilkinson and Roisin Conaty. (R)

11.00 Film: 127 Hours. (2010) A mountain climber is trapped by a boulder in a remote canyon and reluctantly takes desperate measures to survive. Danny Boyle's fact-based drama, with James Franco and Kate Mara.

12.50 How to Get Fit Fast. Presenters Anna Richardson and Amar Latin reveal just what viewers need to do to lose weight, strengthen their bodies and improve fitness levels. (R) **1.40** I Do At 92. Documentary following three pensioner couples set to tie the knot. They include Georgina, a widow who is marrying Raymond, a former chef with terminal cancer. (R) **2.35** Hoarder SOS. De-cluttering experts Curtis Dowling and Joanna Riley come to the aid of a woman in west London whose bedroom is so full of clothes she struggles to get the door open. **3.25** Building the Dream. **4.15** Phil: Secret Agent Down Under. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Milkshake! Monkey. **6.05** Milkshake! Bop Box. (R) **6.10** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.15** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.25** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.35** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.50** Zack and Quack. (R) **7.00** Seaside Antics. (R) **7.05** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.15** Pip Ahoy! (R) **7.30** Little Princess. (R) **7.45** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.00** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.25** Noddy in Toyland. (R) **8.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.00** Shimmer and Shine. **9.25** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.35** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.20** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.50** Police Interceptors: Unleashed. (R) **12.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.15** Police Interceptors: Smash & Grab. (R) **3.10 Film:** Jackie Chan's The Medallion. (2003) Comedy adventure, starring Jackie Chan. **5.00 Film:** The Last Airbender. (2010) Premiere. Fantasy adventure, starring Noah Ringer.

7.00 Magic Makes You Laugh Out Loud. Internet videos of magic tricks going horribly wrong, featuring contributions from performers whose routines have become popular online, including a skydiving magician.

7.55 5 News Weekend.

8.00 On Benefits. New series. Telling the stories of people struggling to live on state welfare.

9.00 Amy Winehouse: The Last Hours Of. On July 23, 2011, Amy Winehouse was found dead in the bedroom of her home in Camden, north London, with the coroner concluding she had died of alcohol poisoning. The singer had fought a very long and public battle with addiction, but in the weeks leading up to her death she had apparently made huge progress. Using information from her post-mortem, medical testimony heard at the inquest and eyewitness accounts, forensic physician Dr Jason Payne-James re-examines the circumstances surrounding the singer's death. (R)

10.00 Most Shocking Moments in Pop 2. Celebrating outrageous events from the world of pop music, including Grace Jones hitting Russell Harty on his chat show, and George Michael's dubious driving. (R)

1.00 SuperCasino. **3.10** Secrets of the National Trust with Alan Titchmarsh. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Wagner's Ring Cycle **9.35** James May at the Edge of Space **10.05** The Sky at Night **10.35** The Horizon Guide to Space Shuttles **11.35** British History's Biggest Fibs with Lucy Worsley **12.35** Michael Grade's History of the Pantomime Dame **1.35** Len Goodman's Big Band Bonanza **2.35** Horizon: The Core **3.35** Close

ITV2
11.40 The Voice UK **1.00** 2Awesome **1.05** 2Awesome: Guidance **1.40** 2Awesome: Fame High **2.00** 2Awesome: Third Wheel **2.30** 2Awesome: LA Story **2.50 Film:** The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement (2004) **3.50** FYI Daily **3.55 Film:** The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement (2004) **5.10 Film:** The Haunted Mansion (2003) **6.10** FYI Daily **6.15 Film:** The Haunted Mansion (2003) **7.00 Film:** Coyote Ugly (2000) **8.00** FYI Daily **8.05 Film:** Coyote Ugly (2000) **9.00** Ibiza Weekender **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.30** The Cleveland Show **1.30** Ibiza Weekender **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
2.55 Film: Carry On Matron (1972) **3.55** FYI Daily **4.00 Film:** Carry On Matron (1972) **4.45** Wycliffe **5.55** This Time Next Year **7.00** Midsomer Murders **9.00** Tonight at the London Palladium **10.00** Birds of a Feather **10.30** Joanna Lumley: The Search for Noah's Ark **12.00** A Touch of Frost **3.35** May the Best House Win **5.20** On the Buses **5.45** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
11.45 Shed and Buried **12.45** Live Snooker: World Grand Prix. **5.15** Storage Wars **5.40** The Snooker Mavericks **6.45** Live Snooker: World Grand Prix. **11.15 Film:** Out for Justice (1991) **12.15** FYI Daily **12.20 Film:** Out for Justice (1991) **1.05** Hell on Wheels **2.00** I Want That Car **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
2.35 The Jump **4.05** The Big Bang Theory: Bromance **7.00 Film:** Men in Black (1997) **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00 Film:** Your Highness (2011) **12.00** Tattoo Fixers **1.05** The Inbetweeners **2.15** Gogglebox **3.10** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD

Film4
2.45 Judy Moody and the Not Bummer Summer (2011) **4.30** Carry On Spying (1964) **6.15** Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk Interview Special **6.25** Life of Pi (2012) **9.00** Non-Stop (2014) **11.05** Black Mountain Poets (2015) **12.55** Prevenge Interview Special **1.05** Wish You Were Here (1987) **3.00** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
The Legend of Hercules, Channel 5, 10pm
The son of a Greek God and a mortal queen grows up blessed with superhuman strength. He is betrayed and sold into slavery by his evil stepfather, but he regains his freedom and hones his fighting skills so he can return and reclaim his rightful kingdom. Mythological adventure, starring Kellan Lutz. (2014)

TUESDAY
Pretty Woman, BBC1, 10.45pm
A ruthless millionaire hires a prostitute while on a business trip. Realising she may be useful in helping him keep up a successful appearance, he pays her to accompany him for a week as he associates with the rich and powerful – but falls in love despite their many differences. Romantic comedy, starring Richard Gere and Julia Roberts. (1990)

WEDNESDAY
Killer Collector, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Two women at an auction unwittingly purchase a storage locker belonging to a serial killer that contains evidence of his crimes. They soon find themselves in a desperate race to uncover the truth before the murderer tracks them down. Thriller, directed by and starring Casper Van Dien. (2015)

Up in the Air, Thursday, BBC1, 11.45pm

THURSDAY
Up in the Air, BBC1, 11.45pm
A corporate downsizing expert loves his life, detached from everyday existence and striving to achieve a personal goal of 10 million accumulated air miles. However, his lifestyle comes under threat by an up-and-coming executive with a revolutionary approach that would makes his role all but obsolete. Comedy drama, starring George Clooney. (2009)

FRIDAY
Forbidden Secrets, Channel 5, 3.20pm
A divorced woman returns to her family home to begin rebuilding her life, but her stay turns into a nightmare when she has frightening visions of her childhood, during which her mother tried to drown her. Determined to face her fears, she visits the institution where her parent resides, and triggers a series of terrifying events. Thriller, starring Kristy Swanson. (2005)

Soap legend takes a trip down memory lane

Hands up who remembers Dot Cotton's first line in EastEnders.

Probably very few who tuned in on July 4, 1985, thought that the chain-smoking, hypochondriac with an ear for gossip would go on to become a soap legend.

More than 30 years later, she's still going strong, and to fans of the programme, is almost as familiar to them as members of their family.

Dot was not, however, an original cast member; although mentioned in early episodes due to being the mother of 'Nasty' Nick Cotton, she didn't pop up in person until the 40th edition – but from the very beginning, her uniform of 'Italian boy' hairstyle and brown mac were in place, as was the cigarette fixed to her bottom lip.

It's impossible to imagine anybody but June Brown playing her either. She was largely unknown when she was cast, but is now a household name. And, as she celebrates her 90th birthday, the BBC is paying her a deserved tribute via this documentary which looks back on her life and career.

"June Brown is a one-off, a genuine national treasure," says executive producer Caroline Wright. "It's been a privilege to be given the chance to capture her magic."

Brown was born in Suffolk on February 16, 1927, one of five children, although two of her siblings died in childhood. She was schooled in Ipswich, was evacuated to Wales during the war, and later served with the Wrens before studying at the Old Vic Theatre School.

Like Dot, she has known personal tragedy; her first husband, actor John Garley, suffered from depression and committed suicide in 1957. A year later she wed Dixon of Dock Green regular Robert Arnold, with whom she had six children; sadly, their second daughter was born prematurely and passed away at just 16 days old. She and Arnold were together for 45 years until his death in 2003.

Brown has spent much of her career as a jobbing character actress, working on the stage while popping up on TV and films such as Psychomania, Sunday Bloody Sunday, The 14 and Lace. Her scenes were cut from the controversial Sam Peckinpah movie Straw Dogs, but she did appear in The Time Warrior, the first Doctor Who story to feature intrepid journalist Sarah Jane Smith, in 1973.

It was Leslie Grantham who recommended her to EastEnders' producers, and initially Dot was a rather unsympathetic, sanctimonious character who, over the years, became warm and sympathetic.

Brown was nominated for a Bafta for her portrayal of her alter ego in 2009 thanks to an incredible performance in a solo episode in which Dot recounts the story of her life on cassette for her husband Jim to listen to in hospital.

Despite her age, the actress is determined to soldier on, and long may she continue to do so.

And those first words? In case you're still wondering, they were: "Give us a tea, Lofty. And a glass of water so I can take a paracetomol."

PICK OF THE WEEK

June Brown at 90: A Walford Legend, Thursday, BBC1, 8.30pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
First Dates: Valentine's Special
Channel 4, 9pm
One assumes that the couples for this Valentine's Day special of the perennial favourite First Dates have been chosen well in advance – not only because producers will want to save their most entertaining duos for this most romantic of occasions, but also because it's impossible to book a table at short notice this weekend. Those hoping to be lucky in love tonight include comedian Vince, who's rarely received a Valentine's from anyone other than his mum. But will the poor lamb's luck change when he meets Brigitte Bardot lookalike Anna? Meanwhile, retired councillor Elaine hopes to make up for lost time with twinkle-toed music producer Steve, and a former 'asexual Asian nerd' wants a 'Norse god.' Thor blimey!

TUESDAY
Super Slimmers: Did They Really Keep the Weight Off?
Channel 4, 8pm
Now January is over, that sudden desire to lose weight after the excesses of Christmases relaxes a little, and it's easy to slip back into bad habits. Around 60 per cent of people in the UK are overweight, so many of us need a little inspiration, and this documentary provides some of that. Cameras follow six folks who lost 80 stone between them. But what happened when all the fuss died down and the Press photographers left? Did they rubberband back to old habits or did the pounds stay away? Plus, a telly star who lost 17 stone reveals the body's incredible response to dieting that sabotages our efforts to keep weight off. Let's hope there also some advice on how to avoid raiding the fridge during the ad breaks.

WEDNESDAY
Who Do You Think You Are?
BBC1, 8pm
Warwick Davis starts his research with his paternal grandmother Edith, who led to his big break at the age of 11 when she heard a radio advert. That advert was 'looking for short people to appear in Return of the Jedi', and Warwick was catapulted to stardom, continuing his acting career in the likes of Labyrinth and Willow. He takes a non-judgemental approach as he researches the family line stretching back from Edith, finding humanity and humour in some uncomfortable stories, while on his maternal side, he finds out about a postman who lived a double life.

Who Do You Think You Are?, Wednesday, BBC1, 8pm

THURSDAY
The Supervet
Channel 4, 8pm
New series. The return of the documentary following the work of Professor Noel Fitzpatrick and his team at their cutting-edge veterinary practice. Their first patient is a young West Highland terrier which has a problem with its paws. Two new bionic feet later, and the poorly pup has a new lease of life. A young husky collie is also brought in after being hit by a car, only for the hip replacement operation to run into trouble, and a lazy dachshund requires double surgery and lots of physiotherapy.

The Great Pottery Throw Down
BBC2, 8pm
The home potters are challenged to master the art of Japanese-style ceramics. They begin at the wheel, making as many rice bowls as they can in 15 minutes, before piercing and carving an intricate design into a lantern using a technique known as the 'devil's work.' For the main challenge, they throw a sake set, consisting of one bottle and six identical cups. The exciting part, however, comes during the firing, when they use a risky 16th-century method in which they pull their burning pieces out of the kiln and plunge them into a bin full of combustible materials.

FRIDAY
Piers Morgan's Life Stories
ITV, 9pm
While we can be relatively confident that Ewan McGregor won't be appearing on Piers Morgan's flagship interview show any time soon, it is fair to say that the former Mirror editor does have an uncanny knack for getting the biggest names in the worlds of film, TV, music, sport and entertainment to join him in his studio before baring all about their lives. This week's guest is no different: 1980s pop icon Boy George drops in, to talk about his long and illustrious career, and the fascinating life he has led alongside it. From his early childhood with a violent father and suicidal mother, to his global success with Culture Club - and the tensions which existed behind the scenes – it seems no subject is off-limits.

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BRAIN GYM No.415

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.

15	17	5	20	15	17	■	2 C	16 A	18	14	20	15
■	11	■	11	■	23	■	14	■	14	■	■	2
■	10	■	2	16	4	16	2	20	11	10	17	10
10	4	11	15	■	23	■	2	■	9	■	■	4
■	22	■	23	■	16	■	11	■	23	■	■	16
■	2	14	17	24	20	15	7	■	20	15	26	10
4	■	1	■	■	■	21	■	■	■	17	■	11
13	15	20	24	■	6	15	10	4	9	23	20	■
25	■	■	22	■	14	■	1	■	14	■	22	■
14	■	■	19	■	17	■	16	■	3	23	17	24
23	12	12	23	17	5	15	25	15	3	■	5	■
26	■	■	15	■	22	■	17	■	15	■	22	■
13	14	14	3	22	15	■	10	4	25	23	2	8

1	14
2 C	15
3	16 A
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
R	S	H	V	N	K	L	I	T	B	D	C	O
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Q	Y	P	G	F	U	M	W	Z	E	A	X	J

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

7. Fastener in the portal at church (5)

8. A room rearranged by us is romantic (7)

9 & 2Dn. Spirit apparatus even now not within the law (7,5)

10. It takes place in the seventies (5)

12. How confrontations are arranged (4,2,4)

15. By which a brother is dispatched (10)

18. In 'Faustus' a tangibly evil influence (5)

19. One broken chair in a hundred is antique (7)

21. Locksmiths (7)

22. The first person to follow the gist of the subject (5)

Down

1. Obvious quarrels, so they make accusations (10)

2. See 9 Across

3. Showing elegant style - the little bird has no end (4)

4. One of the first toys to cause annoyance (6)

5. It sounds a very short preface! (8)

6. Staff pet? It's far too malodorous (7)

11. Right-handed key (6,4)

13. Was instrumental in fixing the parts (8)

14. Cannons linked with assault (7)

16. Used to convey one in the hunt (6)

17. See 20 Down

20 & 17Dn. Chop up food for the sauce and do something grotesque (3,1,5)

1	■	2	■	3	■	4	■	5	■	6	■	■
7					■	8						
	■		■		■		■		■		■	■
9							■	10				11
	■		■	■	■		■		■		■	
	■	■	12	13								
	■	14	■		■	■	■		■		■	
15						16				■	■	
	■		■		■		■	■	■	17	■	
18					■	19		20				
■	■				■				■		■	
21							■	22				
■	■		■		■		■		■		■	

Quick Clues:

Across

7. Nick (5)

8. Infested (7)

9. Anger (7)

10. Anxiety (5)

12. Sparing (10)

15. Equivalent (10)

18. Adhere (5)

19. Defame (7)

21. Expand (7)

22. Regional (5)

Down

1. Inhibits bacteria (10)

2. Store (5)

3. Avoid (4)

4. Powerful (6)

5. Drover (8)

6. Liberty (7)

11. By merit (10)

13. Boaster (8)

14. Give right (7)

16. Beginning (6)

17. Coop (5)

20. Skilled (4)

Sudoku

5				3		1		
		1	7	2			8	9
	9	7			4		2	
6			1	9				
		3				7	9	
	5			6	2			8
	2		9			8		
1				4	6			7
		6		8				3

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

9	6	2	4	5	8	3	7	1
8	3	7	2	6	1	9	5	4
5	1	4	3	9	7	2	6	8
7	8	5	1	3	2	6	4	9
1	4	9	7	8	6	5	3	2
6	2	3	5	4	9	8	1	7
3	9	6	8	7	4	1	2	5
2	7	8	6	1	5	4	9	3
4	5	1	9	2	3	7	8	6

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Telegraph; 8 Roe; 9 Latest issue; 11 Platoon; 12 Aware; 13 Safari; 15 Period; 17 Excel; 18 Lullaby; 20 Electric eel; 22 Ear; 23 Easter egg. Down: 2 Era; 3 Gusto; 4 Aliens; 5 Hostage; 6 Prevaricate; 7 Yesterday; 10 Traffickers; 11 Possessed; 14 Relieve; 16 Plates; 19 Loire; 21 Erg.
QUICK - Across: 1 Different; 8 Own; 9 Designation; 11 Duffers; 12 Their; 13 Scorch; 15 Writhe; 17 Learn; 18 Easiest; 20 Incorrectly; 22 Ego; 23 Lorgnette. Down: 2 Ice; 3 Eagle; 4 Elapse; 5 Twitter; 6 Contentment; 7 Intersect; 10 Suffocation; 11 Disclosed; 14 Cynical; 16 Terror; 19 Sheen; 21 Let.

Thinking space

Quiz

1. Who wrote All Quiet on the Western Front?
2. With Wimbledon, which championships form the tennis grand slam?
3. Who translated the New Testament into German in 1522?
4. What is the male hormone called?
5. How many arms does a starfish usually have?
6. In computing, what do the letters AI stand for?
7. Of what is malocclusion a defect?
8. Which TV programme devoted two editions to the business affairs of Terry Venables?
9. What is the official language of the New Caledonia island group?
10. Which George Eliot novel is subtitled A Study of Provincial Life?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Jordan; 2 TS Eliot; 3 Iowa; 4 Speed of light; 5 John Smith House; 6 Junta; 7 John Cleese; 8 Untouchable; 9 Rowan; 10 Salisbury Plain.

Niner: MASCULINE

Niner

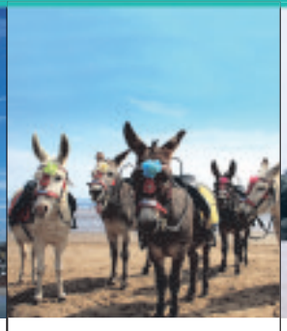
Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

67835 gives a profession,
459719 gives a second profession,
257319 gives a third profession.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Star Reader Travel
Hand picked holidays with you in mind
Quote: JGRT
Your Chronicle in association with Just go! HOLIDAYS

BLACKPOOL, TOWER BALLROOM & THE SETTLE TO CARLISLE RAILWAY
Mon 10 to Fri 14 Apr
Your break includes
✓ 4 nights dinner, bed & breakfast at the Chequers Plaza Hotel, Blackpool
✓ Entertainment on some nights
✓ Afternoon tea dance at the Blackpool Tower Ballroom
✓ Heritage train journey on the Settle to Carlisle Railway
✓ Optional excursion to the Lake District (£8.99pp)
✓ Return coach travel from **Dudley, Halesowen & Stourbridge**
5 Day Break was £259 now £229
SAVE £30 PER PERSON



SCARBOROUGH, WHITBY & THE NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS RAILWAY
Mon 10 to Fri 14 Apr
Your break includes
✓ 4 nights dinner, bed & breakfast at the Grand Hotel, Scarborough
✓ Entertainment on some nights
✓ Heritage train journey on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway
✓ Excursions to **Whitby, Bridlington & Filey**
✓ Optional excursion to York (£8.99pp)
✓ Return coach travel from **Dudley, Halesowen & Stourbridge**
✓ Upgrade to a premier room and premier dining at the Grand Hotel for just £40pp
Upgrade to the Royal Hotel for £20pp
5 Day Break was £249 now £229
SAVE £20 PER PERSON

GREENWICH TALL SHIPS REGATTA
Sat 15 to Mon 17 Apr
Your break includes
✓ 2 nights dinner, bed & breakfast at a selected hotel, Home Counties
✓ Guided city tour of London
✓ Excursion to **Royal Greenwich for the Tall Ships Regatta**
✓ Return coach travel from **Halesowen & Stourbridge**
3 Day Break was £159 now £144
SAVE £15 PER PERSON

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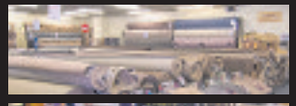

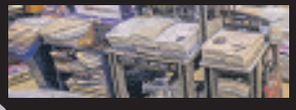

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Majesty bleach cleanable	£13.95	£9.95
Sensations Heathers	£16.95	£12.95
Waterproof bathroom carpet	£18.95	£8.36
Contract wilton	£18.95	£8.95

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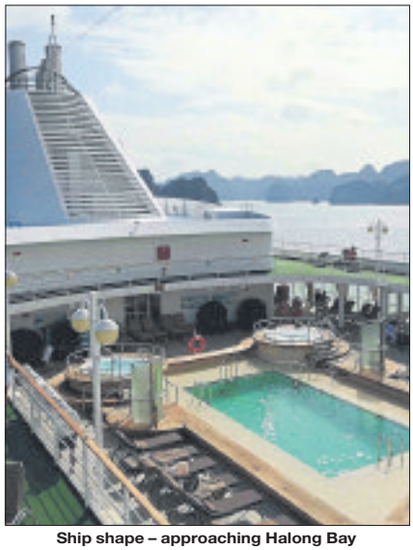
High life – Hong Kong's cloud-scraping skyline viewed from 428 metres high on Victoria Peak

Emperor Minh Mang's 19th century tomb in Hue

Ho Chi Minh stands tall in front of the colonial Hotel de Ville de Saigon



Ship shape – approaching Halong Bay

Good morning vibrant Vietnam!

GOOD night Halong Bay, good morning Hong Kong. Closing the curtains in one country and opening them in another is a special experience.

Particularly when it's your butler who's pulling the curtains and the windows open out on to your own private balcony. It's a tough life on a luxury cruise aboard the Silver Shadow.

My voyage began in Ho Chi Minh City – or Saigon, as the locals still call it. Arrive here and you're plunged into a hectic hive of activity. Bikes, heat, fish, bikes, rice, cars, more bikes, beer, dogs, bright lights, more bikes. Vietnam's largest city is a sharp contrast to the calm of a cruise ship.

Docked within a 20-minute walk or five-minute moped ride of Saigon's historic heart, an overnight stay provided just enough time to enjoy the town's excitement. More than 40 years after the scrambled American evacuation, the influence of the war remains strong, but is just one piece in a mesmerising jigsaw of ancient, colonial, communist and contemporary influences.

By Harry Leather

If it wasn't for the ceaseless heat and swarms of bikes, I could have been in a different century and continent around every corner. Leaving was a challenge. But thankfully a healthy dose of wining and dining helped ease the pain.

Even that evening's 'casual' dining at the pool bar and grill was spectacular – prime rib-eye steak and emperor-sized prawns grilled at our table on 400C lava rocks. Other nights included à la carte Italian La Terrazza, in-suite dining and the 400-seater main restaurant. And not once was was my wine glass empty.

Some 215 nautical miles later and the curtains were opened in Nha Trang, where the south-east Asian sun burned away the early morning cloud to reveal a high-rise city and sand ringed by a row of green hills.

The lunchtime departure left enough time to see the ancient Cham Towers, mooch and munch grilled lobster on the beach. Here, as ever, the locals did a fine job of competing with the Silver Shadow's classy cookery. But not even the tastiest of pho or freshest of lobster could compete with the star of the Silversea show – Le Champagne.

The Relais & Châteaux restaurant was the only onboard eatery where a cover charge was needed, but the mushroom cappuccino justified it alone.

Waking in industrial Chan May next morning was less spectacular. But thankfully the eyesore port served as a gateway to some of Vietnam's most historical towns.

I chose Hue and its Imperial City – another location where wildly different sections of Vietnam's modern history interact to make the town what it is today.

A mixture of Chinese-style temples, pagodas and palaces, the Imperial City is where Emperor Minh Mang entertained his hundreds of wives, mistresses and children in the 19th century.

Brutally, only around one in seven of the city's buildings survived the first few months of 1968 – when American forces fought a bloody and costly battle with the North Vietnamese – and the ongoing restoration work served as a reminder of the reconstruction effort needed across the country in the decades since the war.

Next stop Halong Bay. Furry green karst islands poked through the shimmering blue water, which rippled as the wind broke through the humidity and teamed up with the sun to usher any clouds away.

As the rays shone down and we sailed through the lagoon-like sea, I felt like I was travelling back to a jurassic world.

Finally we sailed 393 nautical miles to Hong Kong. While others enjoyed a sing-along and a 'British pub lunch', I spent the wet and windy final day at sea in the gym, the hot tub and the spa, before savouring a last six-course feast and a party. A few hours later and eggs benedict in front of the Hong Kong skyline killed any sign of a hangover.

There was just enough time to pop 428 metres up Victoria Peak and enjoy one of Asia's best cityscapes.

* Silversea's Silver Shadow departs on a 14-day voyage from Hong Kong to Singapore on October 8 2017. The voyage calls at Ha Long Bay; Chan May; Nha Trang; Ho Chi Minh City; Bangkok and Koh Samui before arriving in Singapore. Fares start from £4,550 per person based on double occupancy of the Vista Suite. Visit www.silversea.com or call 0844 251 0837.

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PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

An impressive extended modern detached bungalow in a cul-de-sac

Substantially extended, a large modern detached bungalow, 16 Southway Court, High Acres, Kingswinford, is very well placed within a sought after cul-de-sac, which is conveniently located for local amenities.

It is for sale through Taylors at £219,950.

An impressive property, its position is enhanced with a very, very large almost full width conservatory which overlooks the beautifully landscaped and easy maintenance rear garden which includes a feature pond and decking.

Southway Court is very well placed within the heart of the desirable 'High Acres' development and forms a small residential cul-de-sac which is within easy reach of local shops available within nearby Madeley Road and Bromley Lane.

It has an entrance hall, an impressive large lounge with a dining area, a kitchen with appliances,includes an integrated electric hob, cooker hood, an integrated fan assisted oven and an integrated fridge.

There is also an inner hall and a guest cloakroom/ WC, three bedrooms and a bathroom with a white suite.

It has a block paved driveway and landscaped gardens.The rear garden is landscaped and low maintenance. There is a timber shed.

Call Taylors on 01384 401777.

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GORNAL WOOD, Guys Lane

SPACIOUS, gas centrally heated, double glazed FOUR DOUBLE BEDROOM detached recently completed to an exemplary specification comprising; porch, hall, cloakroom, dining room, lounge, magnificent 17 ft kitchen with a range of high gloss finish units, utility room. Gallery landing, Four double bedrooms. bathroom. Garage, landscaped grounds. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £400,000

SEDGLEY, Sandyfields Road

EXTENDED, gas centrally heated, double glazed THREE DOUBLE BEDROOM detached with PANORAMIC DISTANT VIEWS comprising, hall, store, extended L shape through living/dining room, kitchen, utility room, cloakroom. THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom. garage, gardens. EPC:TBA SEDGLEY. ALL OFFERS TO BE RECEIVED FOR THE VENDORS CONSIDERATION BY MIDDAY MONDAY 27TH FEBRUARY 2017.

Offers in the region of £300,000

COSELEY, Hall Lane, Hurst Hill

AMAZINGLY presented detached family home and offering accommodation over 3 storeys with central heating& double glazing this FAMILY HOME comprises; porch, hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room, guest W/C, FIVE BEDROOMS, en-suite to MASTER SUITE, JACK & JILL BATHROOM adjoining bedrooms 2 and 3, BATHROOM, garden, driveway. GARAGE to rear. VIEWING RECOMMENDED EPC:TBA SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £284,950

WOMBOURNE, Banbery Drive

SIGNIFICANTLY EXTENDED, gas centrally heated & double glazed detached that has been transformed by present vendors & comprising; hall, cloaks cupboard, extended 27ft living/dining room, extended & recently REFITTED 18ft breakfast kitchen with a fine range of 'high gloss cream' units. Three bedrooms, study, bathroom, Shortened garage, utility room, garden. EPC TBA SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £228,750

DUDLEY, Mansion Close, Earls Keep

Superbly presented DETACHED situated on the Earls Keep development & benefitting from gas central heating & double glazing this family home also boasts; living room, dining area, kitchen-diner, conservatory, utility room, guest W/C, THREE BEDROOMS with en-suite to master bedroom, bathroom, landscaped rear garden, garage & driveway. VIEWING HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. EPC:TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £224,950

LOWER GORNAL, Oakland Drive

Well maintained SEMI DETACHED located in the desirable area of LOWER GORNAL & benefiting from gas central heating & double glazing, this EXTENDED property also boasts hall, living room, dining area, conservatory, breakfast-kitchen, integral garage, THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom, delightfully tended enclosed rear garden, good-sized driveway and garden to front. VIEWING HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £190,000

LOWER GORNAL, Bird Street

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT. Spacious, gas centrally heated, double glazed semi detached bungalow nearing completion. ENVIABLY SITUATED within reasonable walking distance of the village & comprising; entrance vestibule, hall, kitchen with various integrated appliances, living/dining room, two bedrooms, bathroom. Off road parking to front, brick store. PLANS AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION AT AGENT'S SEDGLEY OFFICE. EPC TBA

Offers in the region of £165,000

DUDLEY, Beaumaris Close

Situated in the Dudley area, this modern end of terrace is an ideal first time buyer home. Boasting gas central heating and double glazing, this starter property also has good-sized living room, kitchen-diner, TWO BEDROOMS, bathroom, enclosed rear garden and parking space for two cars. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £129,950

TIPTON, Chatwins Wharf

A fantastically situated semi-detached bungalow on an over 55s development and within walking distance of Tipton train station and Tipton shopping precinct. This well-appointed property benefits from entrance porch, living room, kitchen, shower room, TWO BEDROOMS, centrally heated and double glazed with communal gardens. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC Rating TBC. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £94,950

www.taylors-estateagents.co.uk

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WALL HEATH, Brook Street

●● OPEN VIEWING SATURDAY 18th FEBRUARY 11am - 1pm ●●BACKING ONTO FIELDS, this SUBSTANTIAL DETACHED FAMILY HOME offers an IMMACULATE 'SHOW HOME' style layout, all INCREDIBLY SPACIOUS and BEAUTIFULLY RE-APPOINTED including FOUR LARGE DOUBLE BEDROOMS. Set back beyond the LARGE DRIVEWAY, GARAGE and enjoying a BEAUTIFULLY LAID OUT REAR GARDEN. EPC D

Open day

£309,950

LOWER GORNAL, Ruiton Street

RARE OPPORTUNITY ! A cleared development site in an established well regarded neighbourhood. Planning consent secured from Dudley MBC in 2015 (application reference P14/1139) to construct 10 apartments totalling approximately 6,400 sq.ft (5 x two bed and 5 x one bed).
There is a Section 106 agreement for compliance but no financial contributions or community infrastructure levy. Additional drawings for inspection at Sedgley office or please contact Richard Davies (Richard.Davies@taylors-estateagents.co.uk) to express interest.

Offers in the region of £300,000

COSELEY, Ivyhouse Lane

Offers invited in the region of £60,000 - Deadline @ 12 noon on Friday 17th February 2017 .Offering huge improvement potential. A gas centrally heated traditional terrace with living room, kitchen diner, rear porch, TWO BEDROOMS, fitted wet room. This dwelling also has double glazing and rear garden. NO UPWARD CHAIN. Mine search available - (3 former Coal Mine shafts within 20 meters). EPC Rating TBC. SEDGLEY

Offers invited in the region of £60,000

SEDGLEY, Dumbleberry Avenue, Brownswall estate

TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL!, Enviably situated, gas centrally heated, gas centrally heated & double glazed DETACHED requiring sympathetic updating in favoured district occupying a large plot comprising; porch, hall, store, lounge with bay, dining room, kitchen, lobby, lengthy utility room/store,. Three bedrooms, bathroom, w.c. Large (24 ft) garage, good sized secluded rear garden. EPC: F SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £240,000

KINGSWINFORD, Southway Court

A SUBSTANTIALLY EXTENDED DETACHED BUNGALOW within a superb cul de sac including a superb Lounge/ Diner, LARGE CONSERVATORY and THREE BEDROOMS, The property is set beyond the BLOCK PAVED DRIVEWAY with CARPORT a small GARAGE/ STORE and a BEAUTIFULLY LANDSCAPED REAR GARDEN. EPC D

New price Offers in the Region Of £219,950

LOWER GORNAL, The Alley

EXCELLENTLY SITUATED within walking distance of the village (and all associated amenities) together with Country Park in quiet 'backwater' this tremendously upgraded gas centrally & double glazed detached family home comprises; entrance porch, hall, lounge, separate dining room, conservatory, refitted kitchen, pantry, three generous bedrooms (two with fitted units), bathroom with 'heritage' suite, lengthy carport, large garage, secluded/sheltered garden to side and rear. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £210,000

SEDGLEY, Northway

Imposing, spacious, conscientiously maintained, Freehold, gas centrally heated, double glazed semi detached bungalow upon generous corner plot within walking distance of so many day-to-day amenities comprising; porch, hall, kitchen, 18'3" living/dining room, two bedrooms (one with units), reappointed bathroom, conservatory. secluded rear garden, garage, driveway. EPC: D SEDGLEY

New price WAS £204,950, NOW £195,000

COSELEY, Elmdale Road

SIGNIFICANTLY EXTENDED & with a magnificent specification this outstanding home has been upgraded in recent years with the double glazed/gas centrally heated accommodation including; hall, lounge, store, magnificent 24'8" dining room, extended refitted 17'2" 'hub of the house' kitchen with an extensive range of units and 'glitter granite' tiled floor. Three bedrooms, bathroom. Driveway, garage, landscaped rear garden beyond. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £179,950

DUDLEY, Belvoir Close, Milking Bank

Conscientiously maintained and improved freehold gas centrally heated (combi boiler) and UPVC double glazed semi detached at head of cul-de-sac upon popular development with panoramic distant views from the rear. Accommodation includes entrance hallway, lounge, refitted breakfast kitchen, pantry, two bedrooms (one with wardrobe), upgraded bathroom with white suite, potential garage space, delightful landscape (designed for low maintenance) and secluded rear garden. EPC Rating D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £145,000

WOODSETTON, Rosalind Avenue

EXTENDED, conscientiously maintained, Freehold, gas centrally heated & either UPVC or aluminium framed double glazed semi detached comprising; porch, hall, 23'3" through living/dining room, EXTENDED kitchen with an extensive range of units, pantry, lobby. Three bedrooms, shower room, toilet. Lengthy garage. Driveway and extensive rear patio together with neat garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £139,950

SEDGLEY, Whitesmith Close

WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF BULLRING! Gas centrally heated & double glazed first floor apartment forming part of development overseen by the Accord Housing Association for residents aged 55 plus with visiting warden facility comprising; front door approach (with stair lift) to the first floor landing, lounge, kitchen, inner hallway, two bedrooms, shower room. Communal grounds, allocated parking. EPC:C SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £134,950

TIPTON, York Close

Comparatively spacious, EXTENDED, gas centrally heated, double glazed detached with LARGE CONSERVATORY that has been modernised & comprises; porch, inner hallway, ground floor bathroom, refitted kitchen with a range of light beech units & activities room (former garage), living/dining room, conservatory. Three bedrooms, shower room, toilet. large garden. MINING SEARCH AVAILABLE. EPC: D. SEDGLEY.

New price WAS £150,000, NOW £129,950

WORDSLEY, Willetts Lodge, Clock Tower View

A LARGE and BEAUTIFUULY PRESENTED GROUND FLOOR APARTMENT which enjoys a secluded position, converted from the Heritage buildings by Shropshire Homes. The apartment includes its very own rear garden and benefits from an open front outlook to beautifully maintained gardens. EPC D

£119,950

WORDSLEY, Smalman Close

Situated within this stylish, new development, this BEAUTIFULLY APPOINTED LUXURY SECOND FLOOR APARTMENT offers an excellent TWO BEDROOM contemporary styled layout with an EN-SUITE, plus allocated car parking and separate visitor parking. EPC B

Now available £109,950

DUDLEY, Walters Row

OF INTEREST TO INVESTORS? A gas centrally heated UPVC double glazed semi detached with vacant possession. Accommodation provides breakfast kitchen, living/dining room, two double bedrooms, bathroom. EPC Rating C SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £100,000

WOODSETTON, Regent Street

EXCEPTIONALLY WELL PRESENTED - Meticulously maintained gas centrally heated UPVC double or single glazed first floor flat in quiet 'backwater'. Tremendously enhanced by present vendors the accommodation provides; hall (incorporating caravan style seating which will convert into a temporary double bed), lounge (with living flame feature gas fire), refitted kitchen, double bedroom (with two double wardrobes), retiled shower room (former bathroom). Shared grounds. EPC C SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £70,000

KINGSWINFORD, Ragees Road

Enjoying SPECTACULAR DISTANT REAR VIEWS towards the Clent Hills, this MODERN FIRST FLOOR ONE BEDROOM FLAT enjoys its OWN PRIVATE GROUND FLOOR ENTRANCE and offers IMPRESSIVELY SPACIOUS accommodation, The property enjoys DESIGNATED OFF-ROAD CAR PARKING. EPC D.

New price £64,950

DUDLEY, Attingham Drive

Benefitting from mains gas central heating this modern residence comprises wc, living room, kitchen, bathroom, TWO BEDROOMS, parking. No. 69 offers the advantage of purchasing in conjunction with the Midland Heart Housing Assoc's SHARED OWNERSHIP SCHEME whereby the present vendors 50% SHARE is available to buy, the remaining 50% owned by the Housing Assoc. who charge a fair market rental reviewed annually in line with any increase in the Retail Price Index. EPC:C SEDGLEY

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at Aston Villa Football Ground

34 Lindley Avenue, Tipton
3 Bedroom Semi Detached House
Guide: £50,000 plus

5 New Street, Tipton
3 Bedroom Mid Terraced House
Guide: £48,000-£52,000

12 Ox Leasow, Woodgate Valley
3 Bedroom Mid Town House
Guide: £68,000-£72,000

14 Cressett Lane, Brierley Hill
2 Bedroom Semi Detached House
Guide: £19,000-£24,000

1 Holborn House, Sedgley
2 Bedroom Duplex Apartment
Guide: £78,000-£83,000

32 Castle Road, Tipton
Detached Property, Converted into 2 Self-Contained Flats
Guide: £50,000 plus

Please note charges may apply in addition to the purchase price on some lots
For a definition of Guide Price & Reserve price please refer to our catalogue or website
For the Energy Performance Rating of each property please refer to the legal pack, catalogue or website

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AUCTION
23rd February 2017
at Aston Villa Football Ground

Viewings: Fri 10 Feb 11:45, Mon 13 Feb 11:45 & Wed 15 Feb 14:00

577 & 578 Parkfield Road, Wolverhampton

Two Vacant Freehold Terraced Properties, one of which has been converted into Two Self-Contained Flats (578a & 578b) and has Development Land to the Rear.

No. 577 ACCOMMODATION:
Ground Floor: Hall, Two Reception Rooms, Cellar, Kitchen, Shower Room/WC.

First Floor: Landing, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom/WC.

The property is in need of refurbishment works throughout.

No. 578 ACCOMMODATION (Converted into two flats):

No. 578a: Ground Floor - Hall, Reception Room, Lobby with Store, Bedroom, Kitchen, Rear Lobby, Shower Room/WC.

No. 578b: Ground Floor Entrance, First Floor Landing, Reception Room, Inner Hall with Shower Room/WC, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms.

Both properties benefit from having gardens to rear, gas fired central heating system and the majority of the windows are UPVC double glazed units.

PLANNING:
There is full planning consent for the erection of two detached dormer bungalows to the rear of No. 578 and details can be viewed via the legal pack or by contacting Wolverhampton City Council - Ref: 11/01047/FUL.

Guide: £99,000 plus

View: Fri 10 Feb 10:00 & Mon 13 Feb 10:00

15 The Rise, Great Barr
3 Bed Semi Detached House
Guide: £50,000 plus

View: Fri 10 Feb 11:00 & Mon 13 Feb 11:00

17 Wilkinson Road, Moxley
3 Bed End Terraced House
Guide: £39,000 - £44,000

View: Fri 10 Feb 13:15 & Mon 13 Feb 13:15

14 Elm Street, Chapel Ash
3 Bed Dormer Bungalow
Guide: £49,000 - £54,000

View: Fri 10 Feb 14:00 & Mon 13 Feb 14:00

1 St Martins Close, Parkfields
2 Bed End Terraced House
Guide: £39,000 - £44,000

View: Fri 10 Feb 15:45 & Mon 13 Feb 15:45

34 Lindley Avenue, Tipton
3 Bed Semi Detached House
Guide: £50,000 plus

View: Thurs 9 Feb 10:45 & Tues 14 Feb 15:30

7 Morton Close, Coventry
2 Bed End Terraced House
Guide: £50,000 plus

View: Fri 10 Feb 12:30 & Mon 13 Feb 12:30

167 New Hampton Road East, Wolverhampton
2 Bed Detached Bungalow
Guide: £39,000 - £44,000

View: Fri 10 Feb 15:00 & Mon 13 Feb 15:00

32 Castle Road, Tipton
Detached Property, Converted into Two Self-Contained Flats
Guide: £50,000 plus

FURTHER VIEWINGS TIMES AVAILABLE. PLEASE CONTACT US ON 0121 233 5046 FOR FURTHER DETAILS

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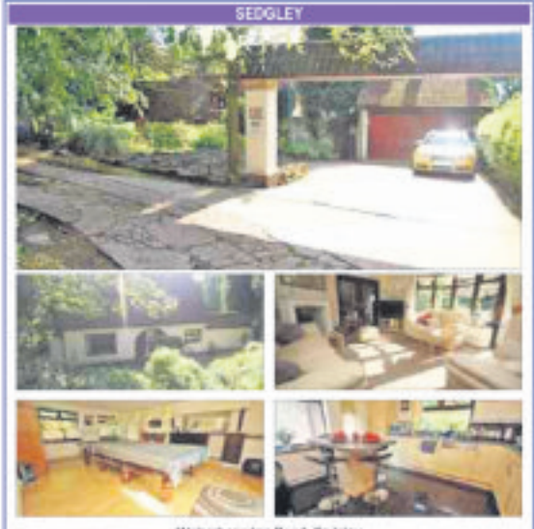

Wolverhampton Road, Sedgley

- A beautiful dormer Bungalow
- IDEAL FAMILY HOME
- Set among extensive grounds
- Excellent condition
- Three/four bedrooms
- Snooker Room
- Two garages
- EPC Rating - E

GUIDE PRICE £375,000

WOMBOURNE

Hazel Grove,

- THREE bedroom detached
- For Sale by Auction - T & C's apply
- Subject to an undisclosed reserve price
- Buyer's fee apply
- The Modern Method of Auction
- EPC Rating - D

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £240,000

LOWER GORNAL

Milton Crescent, The Straits

- Modern Semi-detached
- Popular location on The Straits
- Walking distance to the school
- Three bedrooms
- Open plan kitchen - dining room
- Some cosmetic updating required
- NO UPWARD CHAIN
- EPC Rating - D

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £172,500

WOLVERHAMPTON

Coningsby Drive, Ettingshall Place

- Modern semi detached
- Attractive, well presented
- Breakfast Kitchen
- THREE-bedroom
- EN-SUITE
- Ideal for first time buyers
- Guest WC
- NO UPWARD CHAIN
- EPC Rating - C

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £144,950

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SEDGLEY

Lime Road,

- A generous mid terrace property
- THREE bedrooms
- Convenient for Sedgley centre
- Open plan layout
- Cloakroom and Utility
- Modern bathroom
- EPC Rating - D

£134,950

COSELEY

Pugh Road, Woodcross

- A traditional style 3 bed semi
- Close by to local schools
- Ideal family home
- Open plan kitchen diner
- Lounge & conservatory
- THREE bedrooms
- Low maintenance garden
- Viewing highly recommended
- EPC Rating - D

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £131,950

UPPER GORNAL

Duke Street,

- NO UPWARD CHAIN. Traditional style mid terrace. Located in Upper Gornal with Great distant views,
- TWO bedrooms.
- Lounge, and separate dining room
- EPC Rating - D

£104,950

SEDGLEY

Claremont Cottages,

- A semi-detached Bungalow
- ONE double bedroom
- Driveway parking
- Walking-distance to Sedgley
- Ideal for downsizing
- Rear garden
- EPC Rating - TBC

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £104,950

LOW LEVEL STATION,

Broad Gauge Way,

- TWO bed apartment
- For Sale by Auction - T & C's apply
- Subject to an undisclosed reserve price
- Buyer's fee apply
- The Modern Method of Auction
- EPC Rating - D

GUIDE PRICE £98,000

RIPLEY GROVE, UPPER GORNAL

St. James Court,

- A ground floor APARTMENT
- Centrally located for Sedgley
- Lounge/kitchen
- TWO bedrooms
- One car parking space
- Communal gardens
- Secure entry system
- EPC Rating - B

£525 PCM

LOWER GORNAL

9 Lake Street,

- A first floor flat
- ONE double bedroom
- Lounge and Kitchen
- Excellent location for amenities
- NO DSS, NO PETS
- EPC Rating - G

£320 PCM

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building services

DAVIES & SON BUILDERS
Over 35 years experience in the industry
All aspects of building work including:
Extensions, loft conversions, roofing, driveways & landscaping.
Discounts offered.
01902 579592 / 07837 994465

SOLAR CONSTRUCTION
Building work, extensions, rendering, pointing, damp proofing, exterior paintings.
New roofs, re-slates, fascias, soffits, guttering.
ALL WORK FULLY INSURED AND GUARANTEED
CALL FREEPHONE
0800 959 6376

domestic cleaning

CLEAN (midlands ltd) FOR YOU
Domestic Cleaning & Ironing Service.
Friendly, Reliable & Trustworthy.
Call Anita on: 07854 163 804.

domestic repairs & services

SAME DAY Low Cost Repairs. Washers, Dryers Electric Cookers. 12 mths guarantee. 07850 355552.

drain clearance

ALL DRAIN AND SEWER Blockages cleared fast. Call Fast Clean: 01902 736424.

driveways & patios

CRETE BY DESIGN
Concrete Imprinting
• BLOCK PAVING • TARMACING
FREE QUOTES
01902 489633 (day)
or 01902 604187 (eve)

electrical services

A BARGAIN PRICED house re-wire, fuseboards etc. Grahams Electrical. 01902 842739, 07783 471949.

ALL HOME ELECTRICS NAPIT registered. Fully insured. For a free quote call 07583 320318.

fencing

PORTWAY FENCING
SPECIAL OFFER
6 x 5 Heavy Duty Lap Panels
£12.95 each
Fitting service available or DIY.
0121 531 5250 / 07866 137 656
Mon - Fri 8am - 4.30pm
Sat 8am - 12noon
83 Portway Rd, W'bury
DELIVERY AVAILABLE
www.portwayfencing.co.uk

ACE FENCING. A better quality panel. Supply/Fit. Free Quotes: 31 Bank St. WV10 9DU.01902 723910

gardening services

GARDENS TIDIED from £5 per garden. 25 years experience. Call 01902 713106 / 07813 184086.

For all your Patio's, Turfing, Decking, treework and Root grinding...
Prestwood FENCING & LANDSCAPING
Prestwood Cave Nurseries, Wolverhampton Rd, Prestwood DY7 5AN
Call us on: 01384 273586 or 07947 879403 or visit www.prestwoodfencing.co.uk for more details

gas fitting

A BOILER BREAKDOWN, COOKER, FIRE,
FITTED-SERVICED-REPAIRED
Landlord certs.
All areas covered.
J&E Heating.
Call John:
01902 562664
/07969 687832

GAS SERVICES
• Boilers • Cookers
• Fires • Gas Checks
• Landlord Certificates
• Gas Leaks Traced
Fitted, Serviced and Repaired
Same Day Service
Free Quotes
DISCOUNTS FOR OAPs
Call: 01902 366855/
07761 973975

READERS ARE ADVISED
To check that anyone carrying out any Gas work is Gas Safe Registered.
It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without being on the Gas Safe Register.

gates

TIMBER GATES GARAGE DOORS AND FRAMES
Made and Fitted Any Sizes
ALL AREAS COVERED
Call John: 07958 576728 / 01902 861347

guttering

PROPERTY SOLUTIONS
A*1 GUTTERING
cleaned, repaired, replaced, facias/soffits, UPVC washdowns, all roofing/repointing work. Free quotes, 8am-8pm
01902 722447

handyman services

YOUR LOCAL HANDYMAN
FREE QUOTES
All work guaranteed, Most trades covered, References available on request. No job too big or too small!
CALL MIKE: 07947 621047
0121 6010479

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

I average around 1 to 2 phone calls a day from customers as a direct result of my Classified Advertising. I am very happy with my response levels.
Mr Causer.

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

LOCK & CARPENTRY Plumbing, Plastering, Slabbing and Roofing. 01902 683100 or 07935 906384.

house clearances

A ABSOLUTE BEST cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Also removals undertaken. **07852 172641 / 07710 360327**

YMCA REQUIRE FURNITURE Free Collection. Telephone 01384 231714 for details.

oven cleaning

AAA OVEN CLEANING, Ovens, Hobs, Aga / Range / Micro / Extractors. 01902 689418 / 07910 921736

painters / decorators

CALL M & B DECORATORS
City & Guilds
No job too small
Free Quote
01902 494555

A PROFESSIONAL DECORATING service by RC Decorating. Free competitive quotes: 07773 025880.

LOVE 2 WALLPAPER
Reliable & Friendly, Professional
Female Painters & Decorators
Attention to detail, competitive prices.
For the Perfect Finish with minimum hassle.
Plastering & Coving Work Undertaken
01384 287577 or 07812 484194
www.love-2-wallpaper.co.uk

C I PAINTING & DECORATING Over 30 yrs experience,City & Guilds approved. Free Quotes. 07913 732756 or 01902 650716.

C&D DECORATING City & Guilds / Wallpapering, Tiling and Flooring. Free quotes, call 07973 286288.

plans prepared

ADAM DESIGN, Building Plans. Drawn and submitted to council. Tel: 01902 620200 / 07841 654037. Email: adamdesign@sky.com

BUILDING Plans: Prepared/submitted. K J Bradley 01902 373248 07792 165767. www.plans4u.co.uk

plastering

DOMESTIC PLASTERING
rendering & small building work undertaken. 40 years experience. For a free quote
Call Roy
07887 495726
07583 643932

M & S PLASTERING & BUILDING Services. Home/Garden Improvements.Mark or Sara: 07741 770897

STEVES PLASTERING SERVICE Clean and Reliable, All Work Undertaken, All Areas. Call 0121 567 5919 / 07977 262943.

plumbers

G M PLUMBING SERVICES Complete Bathrooms, Kitchens, Taps Showers,Blockages 07976 012468

LAURIE KENNEDY domestic plumbing, no job too small, fully insured, contact me 07901 345884.

plumbing & heating

CENTRA HEAT
Boiler Servicing inc Free Landlords Certificate.
Power Flushing, Boiler/ System Repairs
£200 OFF/Trade in old boiler
Installed in February. *T&C apply*
01902 845211

Keiron Jones Plumbing & Heating
Full heating systems £2200
Boiler Changes £1100
Longer warranty available upon request, fires and surrounds also available.
For Free Quotes Call:
01902 403823 07811 855231

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

"We are really happy with our Classified advertising package and the business it brings us."
Martin - Centra Heat

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

removals

A2B REMOVALS Cheap and reliable removal service. Insured. 07817 842980 or 01902 744829.

CALL DEAN NOW: For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209/ 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

CALL PETE - MAN WITH A VAN. Removals, clearances, large/small. 01902 741546, 07899 635852.

A & M CHEAP REMOVALS
Local
Careful Firm
Full or Part loads
Call Don:
07749 941319

KT HOUSE REMOVALS
12 years experience.
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.
LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.
Free Quotes - Call Ric on:
07771 727119

KINGS OF THE ROAD REMOVAL Single Items/Full loads from £20. OAP discount. Andy 07512 395370, Keith 07545 618231.

KINGSWINFORD REMOVALS AND HOUSE CLEARANCES
We move anything.
Professional service,
45 years' experience,
DFS approved and we take the stress away.
Please call:
07966 281957

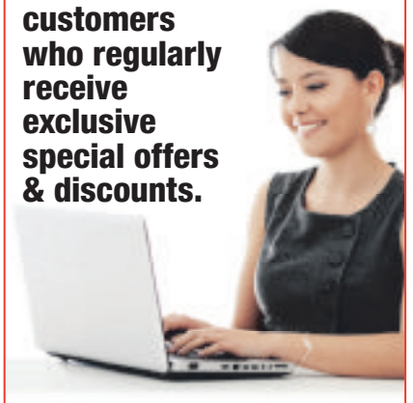
roofing

MG ROOFING Flat roofs, tiling, roof repairs, fascias and gutters. Call 01902 238989 / 07580 465449.

S T ROOFING All roofing work carried out. Call: 01902 884705 / 07841 842824

25% OFF SF ROOFING & GUTTERING
25 YEARS EXPERIENCE!
Flat, Main roofs, rubber or felt, repaired and replaced, all repointing, Guttering repaired and replaced.
BEAT ALL QUOTES GUARANTEED
Call Sean 01902 829158 8am to 8pm

BOOK YOUR ADVERTISEMENTS OR FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS ONLINE AT
bookanad.
expressandstar.co.uk
and become one of hundreds of customers who regularly receive exclusive special offers & discounts.



ClassifiedAds

showers

SHOWERS
Supplied/Fitted
Replaced/Repaired
Bath to Shower Conversions
Call James for a FREE quote.
07908 052470 / 01902 758494

upholstery

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

"I am very happy with my Express & Star and Chronicles Advertising Campaign"

Gary Downes - Bilston Upholstery

For great business results call
01902 319 191

ClassifiedAds Brought to you by Express & Star

UPHOLSTERY SERVICES 3pcs/springs/caravans/pubs/club/antiques. 01902 689844 / 07817 842980.

www.bilstonupholstery.co.uk Your suite / chair re-upholstered or repaired. Free Est: 01902 404698.

skip hire

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

"Thanks to our Classified advertising in the Express & Star we are really busy!

It definitely works for us!"

Grinsells Skip Hire.

For great business results call
01902 319 191

ClassifiedAds Brought to you by Express & Star

AT M&M SKIPS
Fast, friendly service
All areas covered
All sizes
Same day service
Freephone
0800 619 0189
07904 915016

MT SKIPS & GRAB HIRE
Save £££s
All size skips and all areas covered
Same day delivery faster than a phone call!!!
Open 7 days a week
07920 88 57 74 or 01384 24 09 56
SCRAP CARS REMOVED FOR FREE

BIG JOHN MOVES RUBBISH! No Skips, we load, fast friendly service, 25 Lister Rd, Dudley DY2 8JR, Est 35 years, 01384 232359.

GOLDSHILL SKIPS
Bring your own waste cheaper than skips. General, Green, Wood waste any size vehicle. Phone for prices:
0121 557 3346

AN ABSOLUTE AFFORDABLE CASTLE SKIP HIRE
Mini, midi and large skips
GRAB HIRE AND MINI DIGGER AVAILABLE
01384 237577
01902 405745
07719 671845

STONES SKIP HIRE
0121 557 1480 / 07886 721875
www.stonesskiphire.co.uk

4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses have the required Passport information.

guns & dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

AIR GUNS, VINTAGE/ ANTIQUE GUNS, SHOT GUNS, TAXIDERMY- BIG BORE GUNS, TRAPS ETC WANTED.
07968 624202

pets corner

GREYHOUNDS MAKE WONDERFUL PETS
All neutered, innoculated and microchipped.
Call 01922 412212 or
www.rgtwolverhampton.co.uk
RGT Wolverhampton
@RGTWolves

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

KIND HOMES WANTED

KIA- 8 years old, spayed female Labrador. Small, Pretty, house trained, good natured.

SCAMPI-8 year old Jack Russell. Shy little dog.

EARL- 2 year old Border Collie. Lovely gentle boy, good with other dogs.

STAFFY-3 year old. Good with kids, other dogs, neutered.

NOODLES, WEASEL AND KIA- are all 18 month old Collie dogs. Short haired, tri colour, super temperament.

01588 676106.

www.dogsamaritans.org.uk

LITTER OF Cockerpoo puppies, 8 weeks old, ready now, vet checked, microchipped. Call 07582 721094.

ROSEDENE RESCUE CENTRE
1, Radley Road, Rushall, Walsall. WS4 1LN.
01922 627013.
Open Monday to Saturday
11am - 5pm.
Sundays - Bank Holidays
11am - 4pm.
Takes in relinquished dogs from owners, all areas (if they are vet checked/up to date with jabs.)
Donations of dog food, toys, bedding and vet bills always appreciated.

vets

Express & Star

THIS SPACE COULD BE PROMOTING YOUR BUSINESS

Every day our customers get a great response from Classified Advertising.

So could you by calling our friendly experienced Sales Advisors on 01902 319191.

5 Business & Farming

business opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering any obligations.

plant, machinery & tools

WHY USE SCAFFOLDING?
When a Niftylift 120t will do the job!

from £50 + VAT per day!*

Suitable for Trade & DIY
Hire . Sales . Training . Service
www.facelift.co.uk
*minimum one week hire
facelift call us on 0121 313 07 77

business directory

accountants

ACCOUNTANCY SERVICES for Small Business. Competitive Rates. Call 01902 882600

business opportunities

ESTABLISHED WELL RUN COUNTRY PUB AND RESTAURANT FOR LEASE IN SOUTH SHROPSHIRE.
£250,000 wet and dry PA.
Two bedroom private quarters.
Low in going and rent comparable to turnover.
Future potential income imminent.
Box Number P20699 , Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

commercial premises

UNITS AND OFFICE SPACE to let in Oldbury, West Bromwich and Walsall. Easy Terms. Ashmore Properties 0121 520 5318.

6 Property

accommodation to let

A 1 BED FLAT WILLENHALL 1 Bed flat Chapel Ash. 1 Bed Finchfield. DSS ok 01902 686605

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

NOTICE TO READERS It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

FLAT TO LET WEDNESFIELD
fully furnished, refurbished to high standard, with off road parking, would suit working gent, age 45+.
£85pw.
01902 304258.

FOUR BED HOUSE designed with disabled person in mind. Gornal Village. £850pm 07801 746853

SMART ROOMS in shared house. Netherton, from £85 pwk Single, £95 pwk DBL inc bills. No DSS. 07970 717139 or 07940 116130.

STUDIO FLAT all inc, pensioner / middle aged working person. £99.50pw. Oxley 01902 238770.

THREE BED, mid terrace, DG, CH, fully furnished, £650 pcm, no DHSS. 07940 300016.

overseas property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

properties wanted

WE PAY 100% of purchase price EVERY TIME!
Sell your HOUSE - SIMPLE
You agree the price, we buy the house.
BLACK COUNTRY HOMES
• NO AGENTS FEES • COMPLETION TO SUIT YOU
• FREE SOLICITORS • ANY HOUSE, ANY CONDITION
30 yrs
0800 999 999 6
or 01384 226086 24/7 www.black-countryhomes.co.uk

CASH NOW wolverhampton properties
FOR YOUR HOUSE
• Legal Fees Paid • No Fees • Any Condition
• Guaranteed Offer • Repossessions Stopped
We can buy your house in 2 days
0800 389 6788
01902 628047 Lines open 24 hours a day 7 days a week subject to terms

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

"I am really pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising!"

Paul Westwood - Home Cash Buyer

For great business results call
01902 319 191

ClassifiedAds Brought to you by Express & Star

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

"We have been advertising in the Express & Star and Chronicles for over 20 years and consider it a key part of our business with the regular flow of calls, which our advertising generates."

Black Country Homes

For great business results call
01902 319 191

ClassifiedAds Brought to you by Express & Star

Need to sell your home fast?
We can help you make a fresh start
With solutions to suit ...
you can clear your debts and make a fresh start

Purchase Agreed Within 7 DAYS
ALL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED
COMPLETE ON DATE TO SUIT
FREE VALUATION AND LEGALS
FREE FRIENDLY ADVICE
LOCAL COMPANY

MARION | PROPERTY SOLUTIONS
WHY NOT CALL US TODAY
for an informal, friendly and confidential chat?
01384 930 979 OUR LINES ARE OPEN 24/7
*Terms and Conditions apply

Home Cash Buyer
Sell today, sign today, complete when u wish
£££ RENT BACK OPTIONS £££
Houses / Land Required
Ring Paul 24/7 Local 07870 341 089
Sandwell area: Call 0121 696 4154
Walsall & Cannock area: Call 01922 432049
Wolverhampton: Call 01902 489901
www.homecashbuyer.co.uk

7 Jobs

warehouse & distribution

WAREHOUSE PERSON with steel handing experience required. Crane license preferable. Contact Paul Bradley on 01384 77343.

business & professional

STEPHENSONS
a well-established Brierley Hill practice invite applications for a

CONVEYANCING SOLICITOR / LEGAL EXECUTIVE.

We wish to recruit an experienced conveyancer for our busy department.
We offer a competitive salary and attractive bonus structure.
Apply with CV to julie.williams@ stephensonsthelawyers .co.uk

courses

BIRMINGHAM: 21-22 JUNE
WOLVERHAMPTON: 15-16 JULY
Accredited ocn

Learn how to take blood
TRAIN AS A PHLEBOTOMIST
NATIONALLY RECOGNISED AND ACCREDITED
Introduction to Phlebotomy
TWO DAY COURSE - National UK Qualification
NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED
More info or to book: www.geopace.com
HIGH DEMAND IN: Hospitals - GP Surgeries - Clinics - Private Sector - Community - MOD

sales & marketing

DUDLEY MOTOR COMPANY
require
EXPERIENCED NEW & USED CAR SALES PERSON
Excellent remuneration package: company car, usual benefits.
Call
Rob Gilbert, General Manager on 01384 454100
or email **rob.gilbert@ dudleymotorco.co.uk.**

8 Motoring

cars over £1500

FIAT GRANDE PUNTO
1.4 sport 2007, 73,000 miles, blue, abs, electric windows, electric mirrors, alarm part history, full MoT, 2 owners.
£1,650.
07538750391

FORD ECOSPORT 1.5 TDi TITANIUM X PACK
Full leather, rear parking sensor. Reg 28/12/14, 1 owner, FSH, 12,300 miles, low tax, excellent condition.
£10,500 o.n.o.
07500 011142

KIA PICANTO, 2010, 50,600 miles, MoT September, serviced regularly, very good condition. £1,950. 07779 188012.

MINI COOPER S
1.6, 3-dr hatchback, 2008 reg.
49,490 miles, FSH, blue with white roof, lady owner.
MoT May 2017.
Excellent condition.
£5,500.
07940 418616.

THIS COULD BE YOURS

MINI COOPER S
2004/54 plate, six speed, grey, half leather, CD, air con, alloys, new discs and pads, MoT October, HPi clear, clean car,
£2,500,
07546 779139.

NISSAN XTRAIL 4WD
04 reg, excellent condition,
all leather, heated seats,
built in Sat Nav, diesel.
£2,200 ono.
07492 427468.

FOR A QUICK SALE

SUBARU
LEGACY GX
Y Reg, spares or repair.
£300 o.n.o.
07850 742388.

RENAULT CLIO DYNAMIQUE

2011, 39,000 Miles, electric windows, air con, cruise control, pas, Navigation System, very good condition.

£2,999

07879 403302

LOW MILEAGE

SUZUKI ALTO

2014 plate, 5dr, red, 12,000 miles.

Good condition.

£3,755.

01902 496149 or 07951 664184.

REAL BARGAIN!

SUZUKI SWIFT 1.3

petrol, 62 plate,
full MoT, fsh, 30,000 miles,
one owner from new,

£4,600 ono.

07956 670563.

VAUXHALL CORSA

1.2, 08 reg
60,000 miles
MoT

£2,750 ono.

07935 030675.

MUST BE SEEN

VW POLO

57 plate, 08 reg, 5-dr, blue,

12 months MoT, FSH

Two lady owners.

£1,995.

01384 594803.

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cars under £1500

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED
that the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

BARGAIN

FIAT PANDA .

06 reg, 1100cc, full MoT.
New clutch, breaks nad disc.
very good condition,
excellent runner.

£700 ono.

07810 590427.

IDEAL FIRST CAR

FIAT PUNTO

2006.
81,000 miles.
12 months MoT.
Very tidy.
Drives brilliant.

£975 ono.

07970 174138.

FORD KA

2003, 45,000 Miles, Red, MOT April 2017, Full Service History, 3 owners, body coloured bumpers, Ford CD player, excellent conditon.

£750 ono

07734 306099

HYUNDAI COUPE 2.0

2005, 79,108 Miles, 2ltr SE, Black, MOT, 2 pre. owners, part service history good condtion, well equipped.

£1,250 ono

07881 360495

BARGAIN

MAZDA 323 1600CC

5dr hatchback, petrol, 2003 silver, only 74,000 miles, new battery, 2 former keepers, needs a little welding for MoT, excellent runner, clean and tidy inside and out.
Nice looking car worth seeing.

£375 ono for quick sale.
01902 262001 or 07928 679949.

IDEAL FIRST CAR

NISSAN MICRA 1.0

2003, black, 3dr, MoT, pas, good runner, 1 owner from new

£750 ono.

01902 846694.

SEAT LEON SE TDI

2003, full service history, excellent condition, 143,000 miles, new cam belt, water pump, tyres, just fully serviced, MoT Oct 2017

£890.
Call 07403 052574

AUTOMATIC

TOYOTA YARIS GLS

Automatic, 1.3,
Nov 2000 reg,
factory fitted sunroof,
power steering,
3-dr, metallic black,
MoT Nov 24, 2017,
65,000 miles,

£950 ono.

07923 132859

IDEAL FIRST CAR

VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2 AUTO

V reg, 109k miles, 12 months MoT, very good condition inside and out, runs and drives really well, EW, CL, SR, stereo/media player.

£450 ono.

01902 862610.

EXCELLENT CONDITION

VAUXHALL CORSA 1.3 DIESEL

2004, 60,000 miles,

silver, excellent condition.

£895

07913 981460.

MUST BE SEEN

VW POLO 1400

Full MoT, silver, good runner / condition inside and out, radio/CD, alloys.

£675 ono.

01902 862610.

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classic cars

WANTED, CLASSIC Cars. Private cash buyer.Instant cash settlement. Any age. Any condition. 01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

commercial vehicles

FORD TRANSIT CONNECT panel van, 03 Reg., 122,025 miles, MoT Sept 2017, £600. o.n.o. 07841 248579.

PEUGEOT EXPERT 1.9D, MoT'd, 2001, red, good condition. £795. 07913 981460.

driving tuition

AMAZING OFFER 5 lessons £40, 10 lessons £60. £20 an hour there after. Call now 07958 051263.

motorbikes

SUZUKI GSX 650F 2010, black, powerbronze screen, Givi box, beowulf silencer, 11,000 miles, £3,700 ono. 07944 242262.

SELLING YOUR CAR?

We have a package to suit every budget.
Packages start from as little as
£21.00 for 6 nights
Plus
6 nights free if you do not sell.

CALL 01902 317878

---

scrap vehicles

MCB
TOP PRICES PAID FOR ALL SCRAP CARS, VANS, BIKES, CLASSICS
Tel: 01902 408176
1000's of parts available at all times
MONMORE RD. WV1 2TZ

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

A BETTER PRICE
for scrap or damaged cars and commercials. Spares for sale.
NINE LOCKS VEHICLE DISMANTLERS LTD
Brierley Hill 01384 76566 or 70553. Evenings 75397. DY5 3JZ.

ABC AUTO SALVAGE
WANTED URGENT
Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available
0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400.
Oldbury Area.

vehicles wanted

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

spares & accessories

clutches / brakes / gearboxes

A CLUTCH CHANGE MOBILE
For Example:
Citroen C1, C2, C3
Hyundai 110, Toyota Yaris
Clios & Micras
Ring for quotes on others!
30 yrs experience
ALL AREAS COVERED
Call Bob
01384 251328
07972 169554
anytime

spares/parts

BATTERIES FROM £34.95 Corsa, Fiesta, Focus, Saxo. 3 Year Guarantee. Wolves Hire 01902 746723 , WV6 0LE

---

9 Local Information

public & legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES
For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to
Marie Hogg on 01902 713146
or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk
(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

LICENSING ACT 2003
APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE (SECTION 17)

Notice is hereby given that **Mecca Bingo Limited** has applied to Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council for the grant of a Premises Licence in respect of the **Luda Bingo**, 49 High Street, Dudley DY1 1PS. Allowing for the performance of plays, the exhibition of films, the performance of live music or anything of a similar description, the playing of recorded music or anything of a similar description, the performance of dance or anything of a similar description, the provision of entertainment facilities for making music and dancing or entertainment of a similar description, the provision of regulated entertainment from 07.00 to midnight Monday to Saturday and from 09.00 to midnight on Sunday, the provision of late night refreshment from 23.00 to midnight and the supply of alcohol from 09.00 to midnight. The Licensing Register may be inspected at the Licensing Authority, Licensing, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Unit 1, Hurst Business Park, Narrowboat Way, Brierley Hill DY5 1UF during office hours or at www.dudley.gov.uk Any representation by a Responsible Authority or Interested Party must be made in writing to the above address by 2nd March, 2017. It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application punishable on summary conviction by a maximum fine of £5,000.

NOTICE OF APPLICATION TO VARY A PREMISES LICENCE UNDER THE GAMBLING ACT 2005

Notice is hereby given that: **Mecca Bingo Limited** of the following address: Statesman House, Stafferton Way, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 1AY is applying for a Bingo premises licence under section 159 of the Gambling Act 2005. The application relates to the following premises: **Luda Bingo**, 49 High Street, Dudley DY1 1PS. The application has been made to: Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council. Information about the application is available from the licensing authority, including the arrangements for viewing the details of the application. Any of the following persons may make representations in writing to the licensing authority about the application: A person who lives sufficiently close to the premises to be likely to be affected by the authorised activities. A person who has business interests that might be affected by the authorised activities. A person who represents someone in any of the above two categories. Any representations must be made by the following date: 1st March, 2017. It is an offence under section 342 of the Gambling Act 2005 if a person, without reasonable excuse, gives to a licensing authority for a purpose connected with that Act information which is false or misleading.

INSOLVENCY ACT 1986

IN BANKRUPTCY
DUDLEY COUNTY COURT
NO 21 of 2009 **RE: TERESA SHIRLEY ELVENA HILL**

Of 14 Pirrey Close, Coseley, Bilston, West Midlands WV14 8AW.

D.O.B: 19 May 1965

NOTE: the above-named was discharged from the proceedings and may no longer have a connection with the address listed.

I intend to pay within four months from *3rd March 2017* (being the last day for proving) the first and final dividend of 0.05 p/£.

Creditors who have not yet proved their debts must do so by *3rd March 2017* (being last day of proving) otherwise they will be excluded from the dividend. The required proof of debt form is available on the Insolvency Service website (www.bis.gov.uk/insolvency, select "Forms" and then form 6.37). Alternatively, you can contact my office at LTADT, West Wing, Ground Floor, Brunel, Chatham Maritime, Kent ME4 4AF, telephone 01634 894 700 to supply a form.

Mr D Gibson, Official Receiver and trustee

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10 Personals

personal

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The Kingsmead School pupil, far left, shows off his podium medal

Thumbs up from Josh Hiatt after a podium finish

Josh is to mount a BSB series challenge this year after deciding to make the switch

Josh stormed back on to the podium during round seven at red Lodge

Josh hitting the Hiatts after run of misfortune

THE future should look a lot brighter for rider Josh Hiatt after finishing a season he would probably rather forget.

The 14-year-old suffered numerous mechanical failures competing in the FAB-Racing Metrakit 70 class.

Early promise was blighted by bike problems as the team, including his father Nigel, struggled to work out why the engine and gears kept failing.

But once the Metrakit GP70 was up and purring, the Heath Hayes teenager showed why he is one for the future by climbing back on the podium despite a severe lack of track time.

The eight-round series, mainly contested on go-karting tracks around the UK, ended with a second trip to Red Lodge before the final races at Mallory Park – a full race circuit used by the top British Superbike riders.

Serious

It was on the big tracks that Josh, who attends Kingsmead School in Hednesford, really felt at home and gave his team serious food for thought over the 2017 campaign.

Nigel said: "We were back at Red Lodge for round seven and straight away he was on it, qualifying on pole.

"He came second in the first race and was just chuffed to bits to be back on the podium, especially after all the bike issues he'd had to deal with during the season.

"Everything looked like it was going down the pan until Red Lodge when finally it came together and he showed what he was capable of.

"He did particularly well because he had a bad start and had to fight his way back up to second again."

But Josh's favourite race was certainly the last as he tackled Mallory.

SPORTING FEATURE

By James Driver-Fisher

"Everything looked like it was going down the pan until Red Lodge when finally it came together."

The Leicestershire track is one of the country's most renowned circuits.

"The last race was his favourite because it was a proper track some of the BSB riders use, rather than a go-kart track like a lot of the others," said Nigel.

"He qualified fifth and came home in fourth. He had got into third place but he was pipped at the line and missed out on the podium.

"His bike just wasn't as quick as the others pulling out of the corners.

"He loved making the step up to the next level, competing on the bigger track," his father added.

Red Lodge was a good circuit all year for Josh, who secured a third place during round two earlier in the year before mechanical problems began to surface.

Everything went pear-shaped during round three at Rowrah, in the Lake District, when problems on the 70cc bike ended in a 'Did Not Finish' and a non-starter for race two.

He was also running third in the second race at Llandudno in the wet when he came off, causing engine problems and first gear issues.

Nigel said: "We had high hopes for round five at Whitton Mill, Northampton, because it's where Josh practises most Tuesday nights. Unfortunately, we suffered gearbox and engine problems and spent the entire weekend stripping the bike to try and find the problem.

"We ended up doing no racing at all.

"Lydd in Kent was round six but yet again we had the same engine problems.

"This time we managed to sort it out, but Josh was off the pace a bit because he had been off the bike for so long.

"Things went worse when he came off the bike again and smashed it up a bit, as well as hurting his leg, but he was okay.

"He tried to do the second race but was in too much pain so we ended up with another DNF."

Now Hiatt is revving up for a new challenge. He is making the step up to race in the a British Superbike support series this year after securing a ride in the British KTM Cup.

Supported

The youngster had options to return to the Metrakit series or join the Aprilla Championships.

The move from Josh, who has been supported by the Wigley twins during his burgeoning race career, is a move up from the FAB-Racing Metrakit 70 class he raced in last year.

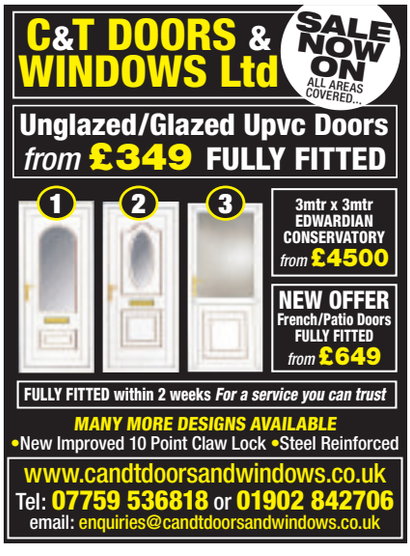
Josh's mother, Tracy, said: "The new bike has been purchased and he had a track day at Mallory Park.

"Josh loved the bike and got on well with it."

Nigel said: "We'd like to thank Phil Turrell from Lower Road Service Centre, Hednesford, for providing us with tyres all season, which has saved us an absolute fortune.

"They cost us £130 a time and sometimes we can go through two sets a meeting, so his contribution has been absolutely brilliant."

Hiatt is still after more sponsors, however. Anyone interested can call 07809 606248.



Sport

Youngster Josh racing towards a bright future

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Blue hoops stagger way through mud

EVERY year the Stourbridge Stagger seems to be recognised as the hardest yet, the 10-mile race always appears to be more and more testing, muddier, hillier, tougher and generally a proper slog.

Competitors were told the race would be slightly shorter due to a minor change in the route, but minor detour made little difference other than to cut out a tarmac section just to find more mud.

Making light of the conditions to claim victory in just 58.59 was Chris Ashford of Birmingham Running & Triathlon Club, almost a full minute ahead of Tipton Harrier Karl Welborn in 59.47. There was a similar gap to the third to cross the line, Conor Carson of Kenilworth Runners in 1.00.43.

In the ladies race in was a BRAT double with Daisy Wilson first home in 1.13.30, Aimee Palace of Cobra RC claimed the runners-up spot in 1.14.22 and Bournville Harriers Monica Baptista was third in 1.16.00.

Plenty of blue hoops travelled the short distance to Mary Stevens Park to compete. Kevin Duckworth was first back in 25th place in 1.07.09, Mick Quane was 49th in 1.12.24, Mark Homer claimed 63rd position in 1.14.11, Helen Tromans claimed first in her age group and 84th overall in 1.16.28.

Richard Jones finished in 1.19.35 in 102nd, Tracey Alderson was 116th in 1.20.30, Rebecca Warren was 136th in 1.22.19, Rory Campbell in 137th in 1.22.23. Darren Marklew was 145th in 1.23.30, Andy Weaver 150th in 1.23.56, Hannah McGuire 180th in 1.26.37 and John Andrews 196th in 1.27.32.

Karen Doy finished in 1.32.14, Jacqui Elson-Whittaker in 1.33.21, Lisa Kendrick in 1.35.17, Kathryn Sneyd in 1.36.00, Carol Fisher also bagged an age group first in 289th in 1.36.50, Stephen Grosvenor in 1.37.38, Sue Payton in 1.38.26 and Gary Noke in 1.48.36.

Heathens team to ride in for 2017 season unveiling

CRADLEY HEATHENS will officially unveil their 2017 team next month.

All seven riders will be on stage at Cradley Heath Liberal Club on Friday, March 10, for the season launch night, with every penny made being split between them to help with pre-season preparations.

Hosted by club presenter Ian Jones, riders will chat to fans and there will be autograph and picture opportunities. A raffle and race jacket auction will be held to bolster funds.

Details were announced in front of a capacity crowd at the Danny Ayres night at the Liberal Club and a similar turnout is expected on March 10.

New signing Ayres said: "I can't wait to meet up with the rest of the boys on March 10. I've already been made to feel very welcome by the fans and it will be great for all the boys to meet up with the fans like I did."

The Heathens opening home league fixture will be at Perry Barr on Wednesday, March 29. The club will be racing on all four Bank Holidays during the season at Wolverhampton.

Cheque out these little belters

Sensei Justin Thomas and members of Young Gloves Karate with the cheque

KARATE club belters have picked up English and European titles – and raised more than £6,500 for charity.

Young Gloves Karate has 350 members at clubs including Stourbridge, with more than 20 holding black belts.

As well as boasting success on the mats, youngsters have made their mark by raising more than £56,000 for children's charities during the past 12 years, with its latest fundraising amounting to £6,720.

This year members decided the money should go to New Hope in Worcester, a non-profit specialist organisation working with families who have children with disabilities and complex healthcare needs.

The money will go towards a new play area and to improve their facilities.

Lisa Homer, events co-ordination marketing manager, said: "We wanted to find a local children's charity that needed to build or develop an area. This resulted in us choosing New Hope in Worcester.

"We are so lucky to have such generous members, family and friends that support us every year."

Sensei Justin Thomas presented the cheque to Jean Wilson, New Hope manager and founder.

Members who raised the most in sponsorships were also present.

SAM STRAPS IN FOR HAYE CARD

STOURBRIDGE fighter Sam Eggington will take on two-weight world champion Paulie Malignaggi in a shock pairing for the under-card of David Haye versus Tony Bellew.

Eggington will defend the WBC International welterweight title against the former IBF and WBA boss on March 4.

They will go toe-to-toe at a sold-out 02 Arena in London, live on Sky Sports Box Office, in support of the crunch clash between bitter rivals Haye and Bellew.

At 36, American veteran Malignaggi is 13 years older than his rival and has boxed at a far higher level during his career.

Eggington's biggest scalp is a rip-roaring eighth round stoppage of Frankie Gavin in his last contest and he's now set his sights on another career-defining victory.

The former British champion, the mandatory challenger for the European title, said: "This is the big name and big card that I've wanted for some time.

Scalp

"I am confident that I can beat him and beating him is a big scalp on my record. It puts me in that world bracket, which is where I want to be. I know it's going to be a big test and it's one that I'm going to rise to.

"Paulie is the man I want to beat. That name on my record will make people stand up and take notice and will make a splash in the US, too."

Malignaggi's Italian heritage allowed him to box for the European Union crown in 2015, outpointing Antonio Moscatiello on a Matchroom-staged Box Office bill in Manchester.

Malignaggi said: "I know Eggington is young and hungry, but my experience and craftiness will be too much for him."

All the tickets, with only Haye-Bellew confirmed at the time, were snapped up in record time.

Matchroom and the 02 Arena's official ticket resale marketplace, StubHub, have some passes available at www.stubhub.co.uk. Television viewers can purchase the Box Office package.

Boxing clever for club move

Councillor Kieran Casey, left, and head coach Darren McDermott at Mount Tabor Methodist Church

THE next generation of boxers are flocking to a Black Country club which is gearing up to move into new premises.

Run by former English middleweight champion Darren McDermott, around 90 members, aged between eight and 37, are currently being trained.

He has been running Brooklands Amateur Boxing Club from his back garden but will soon be relocating to Mount Tabor Methodist Church in Woodsetton once renovation work has been completed.

The upstairs will be devoted to boxing, with a ring, punch bags and lots of floor space to allow for cardio workouts. "We hope to be in the new gym as soon we can. We've definitely outgrown our old one because we've gone from having four members in 2011 to now having between 80 to 90," said McDermott, aged 38.

The club has been supported by Upper Gornal and Woodsetton councillors Keiran Casey and Adam Aston who contributed a flagpole for the premises.

McDermott said: "The club is like a big family, it's very friendly and there is no attitude. We've got people of all races and backgrounds, we welcome everyone.

"I wanted the club to be like the one I went to when I was young, once you were in the club, you were part of the family."

Glassboys go second in the table

Stourbridge 4 Ashton United 1

RAMPANT Stourbridge sailed up to second in the Northern Premier League thanks to Monday night's win at a sodden Amblecote.

Kayelden Brown got the ball rolling within three minutes, knocking in a rebound after Luke Benbow thumped an effort at keeper Luke Pilling.

Tom Tonks and Jordan Archer produced wonder goals to decide matters by half-time. Will Haining's instinctive volley for Ashton briefly jangled the nerves but Brown's delightful second alleviated any concerns.

Brown was agonisingly close to a hat-trick but a deft effort with the outside of his boot flew narrowly wide.

Stourbridge 2 Coalville 0

PATIENCE was a virtue for Stourbridge as they ran out 2-0 victors over Coalville Town on Saturday.

Luke Benbow's header on half an hour looked to have set the Glassboys up for a comfortable victory but the marksman had to wait until deep into injury time to secure the points.

The Glassboys started strongly and Benbow pounced with the opener, meeting a Tom Tonks corner at the near post and heading powerfully home.

Kayelden Brown should have put the Glassboys out of sight after 55 minutes but his header from point blank range rattled the post.

Ryan Robbins and Anton Brown also had efforts fly wide for the visitors as nerves started to jangle at the War Memorial Athletic Ground.

Benbow sealed the points with his second on 94 minutes after former Wolves youngster and Shrewsbury loanee Ethan Jones saw his effort saved by the legs of Matthew Cotton and the rebound fell for Benbow to score his 21st league goal of the season.

10 men hand Yeltz injury time defeat

Matlock 2 Halesowen 1

HALESOWEN Town were denied an Evo-Stik Premier point by a last-gasp winner for the 10-man hosts.

Matlock were a man down from the half-hour mark as Cleveland Taylor was dismissed for a reckless challenge.

But the home side took the lead on 38 minutes when a shot from distance from Michael Williams went in off the post.

A great passing move set up substitute James Bennett Tindall for a 71st minute equaliser.

Yeltz's Lee Chilton had a goal ruled out for offside and right at the death Nico Degirolamo got Matlock's winner.

★★★

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Thursday, February 9, 2017

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
The recycled content of newspapers in 2015 was 71%